

The Stranger's Voice:
Integrated Literary Cultures in Anatolia and the Premodern World

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Comparative Literature)
in the University of Michigan
2014

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“There was one and there wasn’t one.”
—the beginning of a story in Persian, Turkish, and Armenian,
usually referring to a hazy time and place, long ago.

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For my family

Acknowledgements

In the Armenian manuscript tradition, it is customary to find a bit of information on the scribe at the end of a work. These snapshots of the scribe's life, known as colophons, usually request a few things of the reader—to remember a beloved teacher, for instance. Or, to say a prayer for the scribe's father and mother. Or, to appeal to the reader's good nature—which surely is great!—and ask that she not frown too severely upon any errors, shortcomings, or omissions. The scribe is, after all, only flesh and blood.

Colophons are written at the end of a work, but the style today is to place them upfront. I want to begin by thanking, first and foremost, my teachers: Kevork Bardakjian, Kathryn Babayan, Catherine Brown, Kader Konuk, and Karla Mallette. None of this would have been possible without Prof. Bardakjian, whom I have known since my days as an undergraduate, and who has kindled in me a great love of languages. Simply put, he has shaped my education, and enriched my life, in more ways than he could know. Prof. Babayan has similarly opened up new worlds for me. If it were not for her unfailing guidance, warmth, and ability to help me see beyond my own limits, this project simply would not exist. To Prof. Brown, I am especially indebted both for her infectious enthusiasm, critical eye, and willingness to help me think through nearly any problem, no matter how big or small. Prof. Konuk has similarly shaped my thinking in fundamental ways, always helping me to see the larger questions at stake. Finally, I am grateful to Prof. Mallette, who joined this project at a crucial point in its later stages, for helping to give shape and weight to my final chapter.

I would also like to thank the Horace H. Rackham Graduate School, the College of Literature, Science, & the Arts, the Department of Comparative Literature, the Armenian

Studies Program, and the Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fund for their financial and institutional support over the years. I also owe a debt of gratitude to both chairs of the Department of Comparative Literature while I have been a student, Yopie Prins and Silke Weineck, as well as from the departmental administrative staff, Nancy Harris, Paula Frank, Judith Gray, and Sonia Schmerl. To my many teachers, but especially to Anton Shamma, Julia Hell, Benjamin Paloff, Vassilis Lambropoulos, Leslie Stainton, Gerard Libaridian, Sebouh Aslanian, Mahdi Tourage, Behrad Aghaei, Fatemeh Misharifi, Saeed Honarmand, Nilay Sevinc, Bilge Özel, Michael Bonner, Waheed Samy, and so many others: thank you for your time, kindness, and giving me so many things to aspire to. In truth, I owe everyone here a greater debt than I can express, so I will leave it at that.

To my father, Steven Pifer, my mother, Janice Bedrosian, my sister, Kate Pifer, and all my grandparents, but especially to my grandmother, Marg Pifer: I would not be here today without your encouragement, astounding support, and love. To my friends, especially to Steven Assarian and Justin Lindsay: I doubt I could have completed this dissertation without pausing, from time to time, to laugh with you. To my fiancée, Knar Callan, thank you for sharing with me the most difficult and rewarding part of all: the day-in, day-out, everyday routine of life (and everything in-between). For me, that has been the real adventure.

Finally, a word on the ‘scribe.’ I had my first brush with poetry on the *gharib*, or stranger, while living for a year in Aleppo, Syria, before beginning my graduate education. At the time, I was renting a small bedroom in an apartment shared by four siblings—Hovig, Alice, Shake, and Azniv Arabian. On evenings, I would go for walks with Hovig, who would softly murmur, upon passing a particular neighborhood,

“Armenians used to live here,” or, “an Armenian used to live there.” He seemed to possess a mental-map of the all the places where Armenians were not, but should have been. Something about the experience made an impression on me; when I finally came across the large body of Armenian poetry and songs on leaving one’s home, or being forced to create a new home without helper or friend, I found these words hard to forget. In a way, this dissertation begins with the Arabian family, many years ago, and so I leave my final thanks with them.

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Transliteration, dates, and translations

Transliteration of Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish words and names follows the conventions of the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, with a few minor exceptions. In Persian, the short vowels “a,” “u,” and “i” are rendered as “a,” “o,” and “e.” The silent “h” at the end of Persian words, such as *Shāh-nāma* or *gorba*, is omitted. The *ezāfa* in Persian names is also omitted, unless appearing in a transliterated block of text. Compound words (such as *Shāh-nāma*, the *Book of Kings*) are hyphenated. In the few cases where the linguistic context of a word common to both Arabic and Persian is not clear, I have relied on the Arabic transliteration or provided the alternative pronunciation in brackets.

The transliteration of Armenian words follows the system of the Library of Congress, which represents the Classical Armenian and Eastern Armenian pronunciation, with one exception. I have rendered the Armenian transliteration of ‘gharip’ as ‘gharib,’ reflecting a Western Armenian pronunciation, to maintain some conformity with the Arabic and Persian romanization of the word. Note also that proper Armenian names are generally transliterated according to the Armenian spelling: thus, Aṛak‘el Baghishets‘i and not Aṛak‘el of Bitlis; Mkr̄tich‘ Naghash and not Mkr̄tich‘ Naqqāsh. I have also preferred to transliterate Arabic, Persian, or Turkish loan-words in Armenian texts according to the Armenian spelling.

In general, I have not imposed my own romanization on the titles of books, articles, or within citations which have already adopted a different transliteration system.

For readers unfamiliar with the Arabic, Persian, or Ottoman Turkish scripts, note that ‘gharīb’ is spelled the same in all three languages, although the OT transliteration is

‘garīb.’ When a particular context is not specified, I fall back on the Arabic/Persian transliteration of the word as ‘gharīb.’

Places generally follow current English usage.

For simplicity’s sake, dates are given according to the Common Era.

Finally, translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

Abstract

This dissertation intervenes in debates within Comparative Literature on the connectivity between premodern literary cultures. In particular, it focuses on the migration of a single loan-word, the *gharīb*, meaning stranger or foreigner, across Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Armenian literatures in Anatolia during the 13th-15th centuries. I treat the ubiquitous *gharīb*, which cuts across Islamic, Christian, and Jewish texts during this period, as a potent figure for rethinking what is fundamentally non-native and even ‘cosmopolitan’ about premodern literary production itself. Therefore, in telling the story of the ever-wandering stranger, this study seeks to shed light on a much larger question: how and why literary conventions traveled beyond the orbit of any single language before our own globally interconnected age. Chapter one explores how Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī shaped his multi-religious community through translocally competitive, yet locally resonant, literary figures and conventions, including the *gharīb*. Chapter two looks at how some of the earliest authors of literary Turkish in Anatolia, such as SolṭānValad, ‘Āşık Paşa and Yūnus Emre adopted similar communicative strategies, allowing them to legitimize Turkish as a literary language by dynamically appropriating and adapting preexisting literary models, forms, and figures. Similarly, chapter three examines how authors of an emerging Middle Armenian poetry, such as Frik and Mkr̄tich‘ Naghash, likewise reinterpreted widely resonant literary forms and figures, including the *gharīb*, through an explicitly Christian framework in order to better engage with their own audiences. Chapter four frames the omnivorously adaptive modes of ‘Anatolian’ literary production alongside similar processes happening in Europe and South Asia, thereby proposing an

alternative way of figuring the relationships between literary cultures beyond the traditional models of cosmopolitan and vernacular languages. Unlike many frameworks which analyze the 'diffusion' of World Literature, my methodological approach eschews models of exchange across literary languages as a linear, unidirectional process, whereby a 'stronger' cultural formation influences a supposedly 'weaker' one. Instead, my treatment of the peregrinations of the *gharīb* offers a non-hierarchical, multidirectional model for understanding how literatures develop in alongside, in concert with, and in opposition to one another across vast geographic spaces.

Introduction

Whence the Stranger? Reading Literary Cultures in the Lands of Rūm

We are often far
From home in a dark town, and our griefs
Are difficult to translate into a language
Understood by others.¹

—Charlie Smith, “The Meaning of Birds”

1. Introduction

If we examine the Armenian communities which pepper the planet everywhere from London to Beirut, from Buenos Aires to Calcutta, from Isfahan to Detroit, we find, not surprisingly, that one of the most ubiquitous folk-songs across this far-flung diaspora takes dislocation from a real or imagined center as its subject. The song opens with the

mournful cry of a *gharib*—which translates roughly as ‘stranger’ or ‘foreigner’ in Classical Arabic, New Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Middle Armenian—who notices the slender white body of a crane passing overhead. “Crane,” the *gharib* implores, “whence do you come? Don’t you have news of our land?”² Although the *gharib* takes a moment to ponder if the crane is coming or going from Baghdad, or whether the crane will descend to nest in Aleppo or elsewhere, all speculation over the bird’s route remains fruitless. In the end, the *gharib* learns nothing about home, and the great bird vanishes over another foreign horizon.

From the perspective of one solitary *gharib*, it may be impossible to answer the question of whence the crane. But, remembering that the crane is a bird whose migratory route spans thousands of miles—a migration that encompasses continents, not merely empires or nations—it may be possible to see through a crane-like optic and answer the inverse of that question: *whence the gharib?* Or, to put it another way, why did Armenians come to adapt a vast and multilingual discourse on strangers, rooted in the figure of the *gharib*, which spanned from the western Mediterranean to the Indian subcontinent in the premodern world?

To answer this question, we must expand a moment in time which still looms large in exile studies: slightly before and after Dante Alighieri was banished from his native Florence. For, while Dante was busy composing his famous lines on exile, a remarkable number of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Armenian speakers were *also* writing poetry about a restless outcast of their own: the *gharīb*. This stranger traversed

¹ Charlie Smith, “The Meaning of Birds,” in *Jump Street: New and Selected Poems* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), 78-79.

² For the critical edition of “Kṛunk,” see Shushanik Nazaryan, “Kṛunk” *Ergē ev Nra Patmut’yun* (Yerevan: Haykakan SSH GA Hratarakch’ut’yun, 1977), 101-6.

not only geographic frontiers, but also linguistic and literary ones, moving beyond the orbit of Arabic and Persian and going native in Turkish and Armenian poetry by the 14th century. However, despite the ubiquity of the *gharīb* across multiple premodern literatures, contemporary scholarship has devoted relatively little attention to this figure. This study seeks to fill such a scholarly lacuna by proposing the first *integrated* understanding of how the *gharīb* developed across premodern Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Armenian literatures.

But who was this stranger? Not surprisingly, the answer to this question shifts across texts, let alone across languages, societies, or religions. From the 13th to 15th centuries, the concept of the ‘*gharīb*’ expressed many things. In different ways, various Muslim, Christian, and Jewish thinkers all considered their socio-religious communities to be perennial strangers, or ‘*gharīb*s’ in this world. ‘*Gharīb*’ also conveyed a sense of something strange or marvelous, often outside the realm of normal observation.

Of course, in the linguistic *longue durée*, these definitions only begin to scratch the surface. As Franz Rosenthal has broadly noted, the ancient etymology of the word suggests that the *gharīb* is also partly defined by the group in which it *enters*:

The noun “stranger” may be the original meaning of *gharīb*; its adjectival usage in the meaning of “strange, rare, marvelous”, and so on, may represent a secondary, if very ancient, development. This strongly suggests a connection with the general Semitic root *gh-r-b* (Ugaritic ‘-r-b) in the meaning of “to enter”, best known for its use for the “entering” of the sun = “sunset” and hence “West” (Hebrew *ma'arāḇ*, Aram. *megālē šimšā*, Ar. *maghrib*, Akkad. *erib šamši*). The standard Akkadian dictionaries list *errebu* (CAD)/*errēbu* (von Soden) as “newcomer, person accepted into the family, intruder” as well as the collective *errebtu* “refugees, immigrants.” The Akkadian usage suggests that the *gharīb* was originally not one who removed himself from his group and environment. He was primarily seen from, so to speak, the receiving end, that is, the group faced with

persons attempting to enter it, who were usually not welcomed with open arms, and even less so as equals.³

By definition, the stranger is a relational creature, serving to foreground notions of inside and outside, us and them, native and foreign—what historian Cemal Kafadar would call a socially constructed dialectic of inclusion and exclusion.⁴ Strangers represent someone unknown, something beyond us, but the *gharīb* can also signify the entrance of the outside in our very midst, attempting to become *us*. To put it differently, the *gharīb* may join our ‘group,’ but it makes *us* a little more like the ‘outside,’ too.

This dissertation examines the ‘literary’ role of the *gharīb* in the greater dialectic of inclusion and exclusion. My focus will be on a widespread culture of literary production in premodern Anatolia and its neighboring regions, which I treat as part of a broad intercultural zone. Some of this territory was referred to as lands of Rūm, which originally meant ‘Rome,’ or the Byzantine territories in Anatolia. By the 16th century, when this study concludes, the lands of Rūm had come to encompass a much broader region, stretching from the Balkans (*Rumeli*) to the eastern regions of contemporary Turkey, formally the territory of various Armenian kingdoms.⁵ However, the boundaries of ‘Rūm’ were not entirely fixed on the eve of the Ottoman imperial project.⁶ Nor were

³ Franz Rosenthal, “The Stranger in Medieval Islam,” *Arabica* 44, no. 1 (1997): 38.

⁴ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 27.

⁵ However, it should be emphasized that even after the collapse of the Cilician Armenian kingdom in 1375 and loss of all statehood, Armenian intellectuals and clergymen, such as Grigor Khlat‘ets‘i (d. 1425) and many others, considered this eastern region to be Armenia proper, the historic homeland of the Armenian peoples. See, for instance, L. S. Khach‘ikyan, ed., *XV Dari Hayeren Dzeragreri Hishatakaranner (1401-1450 T.T.)*. (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR Gitut‘yunneri Akademiayi Hratarakch‘ut‘yun, 1955), 273.

⁶ For an overview on the lands of Rūm as both a cultural and a geographic category which evolved over time, see Cemal Kafadar’s excellent chapter, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” in *History and Ideology Architectural Heritage of the “Lands of Rum”*, eds. Sibel Bozdoğan and Gülru Necipoğlu (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 7-25. As Kafadar notes,

the boundaries between literary languages, ethnicities, or religious identities as rigid as we might imagine today, and for this reason, the lands of ‘Rūm’ provide us with an excellent stage for examining the interconnected relationships between premodern literatures.

Consequently, my intention in tracing the gharīb across these literary languages is greater than explicating a single multifaceted, albeit esoteric, concept. Rather, by examining the Persian, Turkish, and Armenian mobilizations of the gharīb in particular, I seek to shed light on a larger problem: how overlapping attempts to shape different socio-religious communities in part gave rise to literary conventions which were hardly native to any single language or people. Instead, like the figure of the gharīb itself, these literary conventions were cosmopolitan in nature, even when employed for conflicting purposes. Therefore, by telling the story of how the gharīb migrated beyond the orbit of any single language or people, I aim to suggest a tangible approach for understanding how premodern literatures developed in reaction to the same historical phenomena, including

the ‘lands of Rūm,’ encompass an extremely complicated history of the politics of naming, beginning with the entrance of Turkic peoples into this region: “the word “Rum” or diyār-ı Rūm for defining a cultural as well as a physical space (the lands of Rome, limited over time to the eastern Roman lands, i.e., Byzantium) was adopted from earlier Arabo-Persian usage but now stretched by Turkish speakers to refer to the zone that they inhabited and in large part also governed. Turks and others who moved westward during and after the eleventh century adopted and reworked many geographical names in the eastern Roman lands on the basis of what had already been “Islamized” and used by Arabs, Persians, or Kurds. They also borrowed or “corrupted” many usages of the non-Muslims of those lands. To take full account of the complexity of ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities they encountered would be impossible here; it cannot be subsumed even under the neat trinity of Muslims, Christians, and Jews. [...]

But where, exactly, is Anatolia, historically speaking? Today, the word is used almost universally to cover all of the lands of Turkey to the east of the straits. [...] But “Anatolia” was used even as late as the nineteenth century primarily in terms of physical geography, and as such the designation has the same vagueness beyond the diagonal line from Trabzon to the eastern edges of the Taurus Mountains, namely the uncannily overlapping eastern boundaries of the empires of Basil II and Mehmed II. [...] In that sense, the usage of “Rum” in our late medieval and early modern sources can indeed be identified most of the time with the current delineation of Anatolia, with the same attendant vagueness about its boundaries, but only those to the east or the south. Rum, in other words, included Asia Minor, or Anatolia, but the Ottoman usage had more than the southwestern Asian peninsula in mind. The Balkans, too, were included in Rum as cultural space after the late fourteenth century. Ottoman lands west of the Marmara Sea were called Rūm ili (Rumelia), which is another way, after all, of saying “the lands of Rum.””

one another, within a shared geographic space. In this case, the geographic space of the present study—premodern Anatolia and its neighboring areas—is a region where the hazy borders between peoples and languages shift and dance, like mirages wriggling across the horizon, when we begin to draw close.

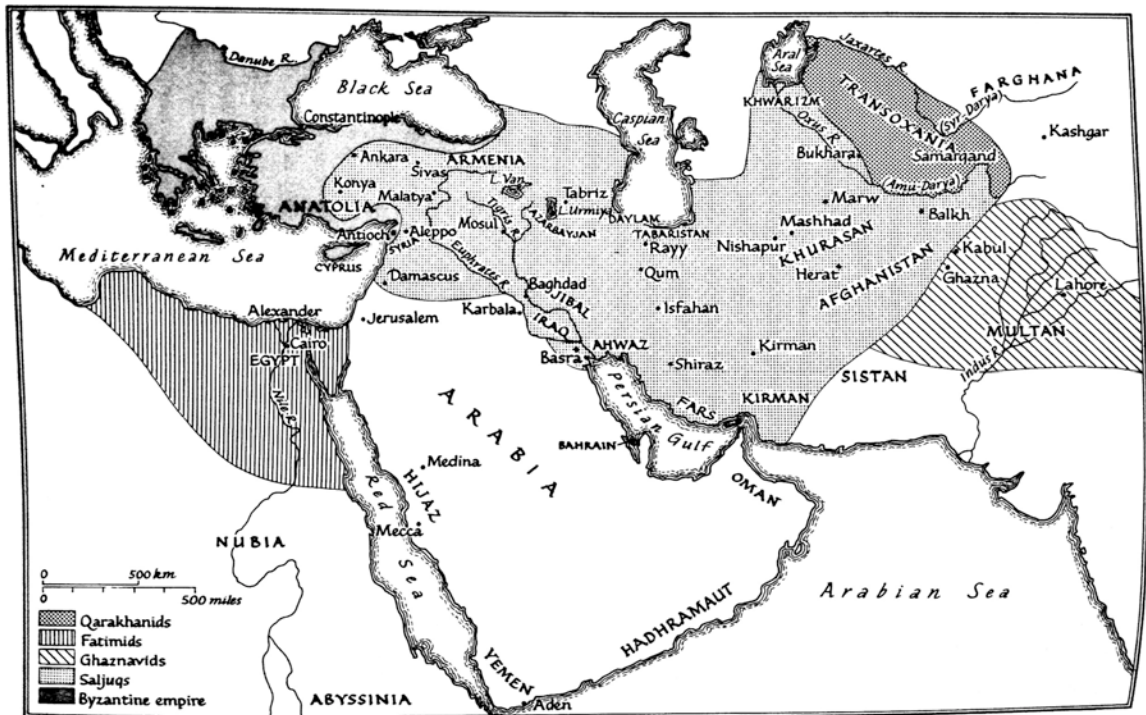


Fig. 1: Anatolia and its neighboring regions in the late 11th century⁷

2. Between Micro and Macro: Towards a Reading of Integrated Literatures

Before we can map the journey of the *gharīb* across literatures, we need to address some basic methodological concerns. First and foremost: what exactly *is* cross-cultural ‘interconnection,’ what does it *do*, and how might we read it? This section examines

⁷ Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 118.

some of the literary-critical tools and methodologies at our disposal for charting literary ‘exchange’ or ‘appropriation’ across languages and communities. In mapping a portion of this vast body of scholarly literature, I will propose an alternative approach for understanding the circulation of the *gharīb* across Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Armenian texts in the lands of Rūm and their neighboring regions.

As Paul Zumthor has noted, “no medieval discourse is known to us except through texts,”⁸ and it is to writing that we must first turn, but it is not where we will conclude. In fact, over the last century, the entire concept of ‘interconnection’ in literary studies is most frequently posited as a relationship either between texts or between an individual author and a particular set of literary conventions. T. S. Eliot’s famous essay, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” penned for an avant-garde magazine almost a century ago, speaks to this latter critical impulse. Noting that it “is our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet, upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else,” Eliot concludes that when we cease to place a premium on absolute difference, “we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously.”⁹

Others have since tried to explain this relationship between individual authors in more rigorous, if not sometimes obfuscating, terms. For instance, Harold Bloom’s *The Anxiety of Influence* treats the production of masterworks in Western Literature as an unceasing Oedipal conflict between fathers and sons, in which individual genius struggles against one’s great (male) literary predecessors: “the greatest truth of literary influence is

⁸ Paul Zumthor, “The Text and the Voice,” *New Literary History* 16, no. 1 (1984): 69.

that it is an irresistible anxiety,” Bloom writes, adding by way of example, “Shakespeare will not allow you to bury him, or escape him, or replace him.”¹⁰ Aside from Bloom’s eidetic scope of reading, much of his work has since been problematized, from its focus on a western, male canon, a romanticist concept of literary genius, and last but not least, the concept of ‘influence’ itself. For Bloom, influence (which shares the same root as influenza) is something western authors after Shakespeare cannot really escape; hence influence produces an ‘irresistible anxiety,’ a site where the authenticity of the author and originality of the text is both fetishized and called into question.

In an attempt to move away from traditional source study, many other scholars have approached the concept of ‘connectivity’ between literary texts in more dynamic terms, thanks in part to Claude Lévi-Strauss and the rise of structuralism. For instance, Julia Kristeva introduced the term *intertextualité* in the late sixties, famously describing any text as a “permutation of texts,” or intersecting semiotic fields which are not expressive of a superposed relationship between individual authors.¹¹ Analogously, Roland Barthes suggested that “the intertext is not necessarily a field of influences,” but rather something more reactive in nature in which both authors and readers take part.¹² Other important theorists, such as Gerard Genette, have created entire typologies to describe the relationships between discrete texts, of which the ‘intertext’ represents the

⁹ T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” in *Modern Criticism: Theory and Practice*, edited by Walter E. Sutton and Richard Jackson Foster (New York, Odyssey Press, 1963), 141.

¹⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), xviii.

¹¹ Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. Alice Jardine, Thomas Gora, and Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), 36.

¹² Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Macmillan, 1997), 145.

more literal presence of one text within another, in the form of citation, allusion, or plagiarism.¹³

While intertextuality does not often attempt to explain the *historical and social* dynamics of literary production, its legacy has widely shaped literary studies today, including methodologies which do make such an attempt. Fifteen years ago, Franco Moretti turned to world-systems theory to forge his vision of “distant reading,” ushering in a renewed debate over what it means to read literature beyond a national framework. Rightly criticizing “theories of form” for being “blind to history, and historical work blind to form,”¹⁴ Moretti advocates a focus on “units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes—or genres and systems,” which circulate across the planet.¹⁵ Many have lauded the spirit behind this approach while challenging its conclusions, as Moretti largely understands the “diffusion” of these units, such as the narrative form of the modern novel, as emanating unidirectionally from the “center” (read: Europe) of this world-literary system, creating ‘hybrid texts’ which combine “*a plot from the core, and a style from the periphery.*”¹⁶ In a broad sense, Moretti’s framework for charting the ‘diffusion’ of literary forms around the world is not entirely unlike Bloom’s Oedipal struggle between literary fathers and sons, in that the periphery

¹³ For Genette, even direct reference is not necessary to establish a relationship between texts: for example, he posits the *Aeneid* and *Ulysses* as ‘hypertexts’ of a preexisting work, the ‘hypotext’ of the *Odyssey*, in which the former narratives could not exist without the latter. See Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, translated by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 3.

¹⁴ Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (London: Verso, 2005), 69.

¹⁵ Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature." *New Left Review* 68, no. 1 (2000): 57.

¹⁶ Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London: Verso, 2013), 132.

similarly cannot escape the ‘forms’ of the center, despite the fact that it examines literary production on a much larger scale.¹⁷

Compounding this issue further, similar rubrics for reading the interconnected development of ‘global’ or ‘world’ literature speak, purposefully and almost exclusively, to the modern period. Moretti goes as far as to posit *two separate world literatures*—one premodern and defined by a diversity of local literatures “not yet stably subordinated to a single center,” and the modern counterpart a “world literary system,” unified in the “sameness” of a world literary market.¹⁸ Whether one finds utility in this argument or not, for Moretti, these epochs are so “structurally unlike one another that they require completely different theoretical approaches.”¹⁹ Yet, save for a few scholars such as David Damrosch, who has proposed the spread of alphabetic technologies as integrating diverse peoples across space and time,²⁰ the premodern era is relatively absent from the mainstream methodological debates on the connectivity of the literary world, even broken down into what Moretti calls “large regional systems.”²¹

This need not be the case: the premodern period has much to teach us about how and why literatures develop in relation to one another, and some of these lessons still have relevance for understanding literary production within the “large regional systems”

¹⁷ “Form as struggle,” Moretti asserts, “this is what we have here: a struggle between the story that comes from the core, and the viewpoint that ‘receives’ it in the periphery,” creating a “spiral of hegemony and resistance” which, for Moretti, characterizes world literature. (Ibid., 134). Nor was Moretti alone in conceptualizing the “struggle” between center and periphery in the global development of literary forms. Writing at nearly the same time, Pascale Casanova has similarly theorized the development of ‘world’ literature in terms of the interplay between centers (Paris, mainly) and peripheries, although she importantly recognizes that these relationships are characterized by an unequal access to power and resources. See Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

¹⁸ Moretti, *Distant Reading*, 134-5.

¹⁹ Ibid., 135.

²⁰ David Damrosch, "Scriptworlds: Writing Systems and the Formation of World Literature," *Modern Language Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2007): 195-219.

²¹ Moretti, *Distant Reading*, 134.

which comprise our globe today. In fact, while our approach must differ, the underlying issue in many of these methodologies is strikingly similar in the premodern period: how can we balance the ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ units of literary and historical analysis, moving beyond an insular and monolingual framework, towards an understanding of premodern literatures which is more connective in nature? There are many studies which have expertly catalogued synchronistic literary forms and themes between, say, Arabic and Persian literatures, Turkish and Persian literatures, and Armenian and Persian literatures. But how might we form a more historically integrated understanding of premodern literary production, on a larger scale, out of the minutia of literary forms and figures which permeate this vast geographical space? Furthermore, how might we do so without treating ‘interconnection’ as the superposition of a dominant culture over a weaker culture, or, alternatively, without falling back on the rigid binaries of center and periphery, originality and imitation, author and text?

To address these questions properly, we have to examine how our premodern authors conceptualized ‘interconnection’ across literary languages on their own terms. This means not only leaving our modern understandings of ‘connectivity’ behind, but also looking for an alternative terminology which more closely engages our source material. Traveling backward in time, we find one productive entry point into the problem of cross-cultural ‘interconnection’ in 14th century Erzinka (Erzincan). As we move through the winding streets of this multilingual community, we come across a gathering crowd, drawn to the sound of a man reciting the Persian *Shāh-nāma*. There’s something captivating about the performer’s voice on this day: it seems the pattern and sound of his words stirs something deeply within those who give ear. When the

performance concludes, some of this audience seeks out another poet, an Armenian by the name of Kostandin Erznkats'i, and requests from him a *new* poem in the lilting cadence of the *Shāh-nāma*, composed in the same enticing “voice.” Kostandin obliges: he not only utilizes a shortened form of the *Shāh-nāma*'s motaqāreb meter, but also incorporates ‘Persianate’ tropes and themes into his final composition. And, he leaves an instruction for all those who would encounter his manuscript: “recite it in the voice [*dzayn*] of the *Shāh-nāma*,” he advises.²²

What did it mean to compose in the ‘voice’ of another work, even in another language? Manuk Abeghyan, one of the foremost scholars of Armenian literature over the last century, has suggested that to recite in a particular “voice” in Armenian means to draw upon a specific accentual-musical rhythm during a public performance.²³ James R. Russell has likewise noted in the case of Kostandin that “‘voice’ probably refers not only to meter, but also to the chant traditionally employed by Persians in reciting their national epic.”²⁴ At the same time, while Kostandin’s companions requested a new poem in the ‘voice’ of a preexisting work, scholars have also established that Kostandin did more than draw from the meter or rhythmic ‘chant’ of the *Shāh-nāma* only. As Theo van Lint has

²² See Kostandin Erznkats'i, *Tagher*, ed. Armenuhi Srabyan (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR GA Hratarakch'ut'yun, 1962), 209.

²³ Manuk Abeghyan, *Hayots' Hin Grakanut'ean Patmut'yun*, vol. 2 (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR Gitut'yunneri Akademiayi Hratarakch'ut'yun, 1946), 552-4. For other groundbreaking studies on the relationship between Armenian and Persian literature, see also Babgen Ch'ugaszyan, *Hay-Iranakan Grakan Arnch'ut'yunner* (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR GA Hratarakch'ut'yun, 1963); A. K. Kozmoyan, *Hayots' ev Parsits' Mijnadaryan K'narergut'yan Hamematakan Poetikan* (Yerevan: HH GAA "Gitut'yun" Hratarakch'ut'yun, 1997); and especially James R. Russell's magisterial collection of articles, *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9 (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

²⁴ James Russell, *Yovhannēs T'ikuranc'i and the Mediaeval Armenian Lyric Tradition* (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1987), 7. To a limited extent, this understanding of ‘voice’ also corresponds broadly with other literary and musical cultures in the lands of Rūm. For example, one word for ‘voice’ in Persian and Ottoman Turkish is *āvāz*, which is also a type of song that holds a particular relationship to metrical poetry. In Persian, the solo performer of an *āvāz* could improvise upon preexisting musical structures,

shown, Kostandin also reinterpreted many tropes and themes from the *Shāh-nāma* through an explicitly *Christian* framework,²⁵ and Russell has also drawn parallels between the invocations to God at the beginning of Kostandin’s poem and Ferdowsī’s *Shāh-nāma*.²⁶ In other words, Kostandin aimed not only to impart lessons about Christianity to his audience, but to do so in a manner which was already *familiar and enticing*, even if that meant reconfiguring the poetics of supposedly alternate cultural and literary spheres. More broadly speaking, then, Kostandin spoke in a ‘voice’ which his audience recognized, both in terms of the poem’s *sound*, but also in terms of its literary form and content—drawing from a similar *conceptual language and set of literary conventions* to produce a different and sometimes conflicting *meaning*.²⁷

While I am not implying that Kostandin’s companions had this understanding of ‘voice’ in mind when they requested a new poem in the voice of the *Shāh-nāma*, Kostandin undeniably responded by composing in a ‘manner’ (to use Russell’s translation of ‘voice’) which implicates more than a style of public recitation. Furthermore, a reading of poetic ‘voice’ which acknowledges a host of *other* adaptations and reinterpretations is supported by many similar examples beyond the city of Erznka. In fact, the request by Kostandin’s companions to compose a new poem in the ‘voice’ of another one was not an anomaly at this period in time, but rather, as I will argue

adapting the tune to match both the contingencies of the text and mood of the audience. See G. Tsuge, “Avaz,” in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, online edition, 2011, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/avaz>.

²⁵ See Theo van Lint, “Kostandin of Erznka: An Armenian Religious Poet of the XIII-XIVth Century” (PhD diss., University of Leiden, 1996).

²⁶ Russell, *Yovhannēs T’lkuranc’i*, 7.

²⁷ Consequently, this understanding of the poetic ‘voice’ differs somewhat from Zumthor’s conception of premodern vocalité, which regards the human voice as a *medium* of expression, and it was through this medium that audiences often engaged with literary texts in a public and communal manner. It was the human voice which lent accent and meaning to a literary text, emphasizing some words over others, coloring the receptive mood of the audience. See Paul Zumthor, *Introduction à La Poésie Orale*, (Paris: Seuil, 1983).

throughout this dissertation, fits into a greater culture of ‘appropriating’ and reconfiguring the literary conventions of ‘others’ in the lands of Rūm. For instance, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī also wrote his masterpiece, the *Maṣnavī*, at the request of his companions, who desired a new work in the mode or style [*tarz*] of another Persian poet, Sanā’ī, but in the meter [*vazn*] of ‘Aṭṭār.²⁸ Similarly, the companions of Solṭān Valad, Rūmī’s son and eventual successor, requested a new book in the meter [*vazn*] of *Maṣnavī*, because his community had already “grown used to” the many recitations of his father’s work.²⁹ Not only did Solṭān Valad compose this new work in Persian meter of the *Maṣnavī*, but he also wrote some of the earliest lines of ‘colloquial’ Greek and ‘colloquial’ Turkish in a similar poetic style.

Most significantly, these adaptations of preexisting literary forms and styles were also occasioned by the transposition of various poetic conventions into new orbits of meaning-making. For instance, Rūmī *reinterpreted and revoiced* the poetics of Sanā’ī and ‘Aṭṭār, citations from the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth, and a multitude of popular narrative forms and themes, many of them sexual or humorous, in order to draw his greater public into a new socio-religious community. We can also observe this same omnivorous mode of adaptation in the case of Solṭān Valad, who attempted to engage even more directly with the Greek and Turkish population of Konya, in part by utilizing familiar Greek and Turkish marketplace vocabulary to convey theological ideas. Even more importantly, Solṭān Valad helped to establish Turkish *as* a literary language in Rūm by encoding his verses in the meter of his father’s *Maṣnavī*. In a broad sense, this *process* of composing in

²⁸ Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-‘ārefīn*, ed. T. Yazıcı, vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi 1959), 740.

²⁹ Solṭān Valad, *Rabāb-nāma*, ed. ‘Alī Solṭānī Gerdfarāmarzī (Tehran: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, Tehran Branch, 1980), 1.

a particular meter [*vazn*] or style [*tarz*] is not altogether unlike composing in a particular ‘voice,’ insofar as in each of these cases, the utilization of preexisting poetic conventions coincides with a more ambitious attempt to communicate in widely accessible terms, even across seemingly disparate peoples.

In this sense, we might understand a literary ‘voice,’ or an accessible and enticing poetic manner of communicating, as encompassing a larger set of preexisting literary conventions and concepts. In fact, Walter Andrews has proposed a similar understanding of ‘voice’ in the context of Ottoman poetry, which he views as a socio-cultural ‘script’ which was widely comprehensible across different social classes.³⁰ According to Andrews, Ottoman poetry speaks in three primary ‘voices:’ the religious and mystical voice, the hierarchical voice which reflects social dynamics of power, and the emotional voice, which guides the reader to take part in common subjective experiences. Andrews reads these ‘voices’ across both sides of the supposed ‘folk’ and ‘elite’ literary divide, thereby suggesting that the chasm between ‘high’ and ‘low’ modes of literary production was hardly uncrossable, but rather was informed by the same underlying conceptual language.

However, the question this study asks is somewhat different: what might it look like to read the dialogism of poetic ‘voices’ not only across social strata, but also across literary languages, ethnicities, and religions?

This dissertation seeks to make a contribution to the study of premodern literatures by focusing on composing in the poetic styles of ‘others,’ but for new purposes and audiences. The figure of the *gharīb*, a micro-unit much smaller than the text, provides

³⁰ See Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985).

an accessible entry point to charting the greater relationships between different cultures of literary production, in part because this figure cuts multilaterally across so many of these literary ‘voices,’ regardless of religion or ethnicity, in the lands of Rūm. At the same time, on a macro scale, I argue that the practice of revoicing the literary forms and figures of ‘others’ in the premodern world in part gave rise to cosmopolitan literary conventions which were native to no single literary language or people: widely accessible communicative ‘voices’ which blended, for instance, the poetics of the *Shāh-nāma* with the semiotics of didactic Christian literature. The motaqāreb meter is a single example of this, for poets in Rūm encoded Turkish, Persian, Arabic, and even Armenian poetry in this metrical form during this period, creating congruence between literary ‘systems’ by establishing a widely recognizable benchmark not only for what a literary text *looks* like, but also what one *sounds* like.

Andrews’ understanding of the poetic ‘voice’ as a socio-cultural script, internalized by disparate members of the same society, reflects an important dimension of literary production in Rūm during the pre-Ottoman period: the poets who recombined different literary conventions often did so without necessarily having to look ‘outside’ of the multiple literacies which they similarly internalized. As I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, these authors embodied a range of literacies which spanned multiple languages and literary conventions. This holds particular significance for modern concepts of literary ‘interaction,’ as this *embodiment* of multiple literary cultures upsets any attempt to chart the supposed ‘diffusion’ of literary conventions along linear, unidirectional trajectories—either between centers and peripheries, or between supposedly ‘dominant’ cultural formations and ‘weaker’ ones.

We cannot always bifurcate these authors' greater communities along tidy linguistic, ethnic, or religious lines, either—a fact which did not escape our premodern subjects. For instance, later in the 16th century, Muṣṭafā 'Ālī, an important Ottoman literatus, would write that “most of the inhabitants of Rūm are of confused ethnic origins,” and even the 'Rūmīs,' who were generally considered to be Muslims in Ottoman territory, often had lineages “either on the father's side or their mother's side” which begin with non-Muslims. “It is as if two different species of fruit-bearing tree mingled and mated, with the leaves and fruits; and the fruit of this union was large and filled with liquid, like a princely pearl,”³¹ Muṣṭafā 'Ālī wrote. Several historians have since commented on the fluid 'permeability' between communities during this period, such as Tijana Krstić and Cemal Kafadar, who argues that Muṣṭafā 'Ālī appreciated “the plasticity of identities” of the preceding era which had “gone into the making of the neo-Rūmīs.”³² Despite the fact that modern historiography often treats ethnonyms such as 'Greek' or 'Turkish' as stable conceptual categories for this premodern period, Kafadar contends that “identities were in particularly rapid flux”³³ during this era.

For Kafadar, this does not mean that “being a Turk or a Muslim or a Christian did not matter;” on the contrary, it mattered a great deal.³⁴ Rather, he suggests that we ought to understand how these categories were often permeable and malleable, shifting and relational, instead of merely taking such ethnic and religious identities for granted. For this reason, Kafadar rightly observes that “historians tend to overlook the fact that [...]

³¹ Quoted from Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 254.

³² *Ibid.*, 28.

³³ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁴ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 27.

one is not necessarily born into a people; one may also become a people, within a socially constructed dialectic of inclusions and exclusions.”³⁵ In fact, this very problem of fostering community and shaping such identities is palpable across many works concerning the *gharīb* which I will examine. These authors, powerful religious figures in their own right, were often vying for similar, if not overlapping, audiences. Consequently, we can trace a considerable amount of conceptual overlap in the literary languages they configured, as these authors adopted modes of communicating which were accessible, widely comprehensible, and to a certain extent, already familiar to their heterogeneous audiences.

In short, this study treats appropriation, adaptation, and exchange across literary languages as a dynamic activity and communicative strategy: a negotiation over meaning and authority between author and audience, text and an extra-textual social fabric. My investigation here will focus on the various poets, situated within and around the ‘lands of Rūm,’ who are often represented as foundational figures within different national literary historiographies, such as Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (in Persian literature), Yūnus Emre (in Turkish literature), and Frik (in Armenian literature). However, rather than create a hierarchical genealogy of Oedipal ‘fathers and sons’ under the Bloomian model, or treat this phenomenon as a direct relationship between authors and texts, I will look at how these authors, in adopting and adapting overlapping poetic voices, were part of an integrated culture of literary production that extended even beyond the lands of Rūm.

³⁵ Ibid., 27.

3. Integration in the Lands of Rūm

Let us return to the crane for a moment here and analyze how the problem of literary ‘interconnection’ applies to Anatolia and its neighboring regions in particular. We are soaring above the lands of Rūm, on the wings of the crane, near the end of Rūmī’s lifetime in the latter half of the 13th century. If we gaze upon the literary landscape below us through the lens of an integrated literary history, what would stand out within our field of vision?

Taking only a fleeting glance, we see the Byzantine Empire in the west, the dynastically Turkic Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm, now a vassal to the Ilkhanate Empire, spanning much of central Anatolia, and the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia bordering Rūm on a corner of the northeast Mediterranean coast. Of course, within a century, much of the political landscape will be completely redrawn, with the proliferation of different Turkic beyliks, the decline of Saljūq rule, and the fall of Cilicia to the Mamlūks of Egypt. Even more lasting changes occur in the century after that, with the subsequent invasions of Tamerlane, Byzantine’s loss of Constantinople to the ascendant Ottomans in 1453, and an ongoing struggle between different Turkic tribal federations, such as the Āq Qoyunlū and the Qarā Qoyunlū, in the east.

If we dip lower to take a closer view, we can see that ‘strangers’ of many kinds are moving across the lands of Rūm at this time. Itinerant Ṣūfī pilgrims circulate from city to city, like well-traveled coins passing through uncountable hands, seeking discipline through estrangement from hearth and home. Others, like scholars from the eastern realm of Khorāsān, have come to the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm to seek patronage,

leaving their native home forever. Travelers such as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, Marco Polo, William of Rubruck, and Ruy González de Clavijo all pass through this region on their way elsewhere. Not all of these migrations and journeys are voluntary, however, and many Cilician Armenians refugees are forced to disperse after the fall of their kingdom. Other immigrants flood a variety of cities in the wake of multiple invasions by the Mongols and, later, Tamerlane.

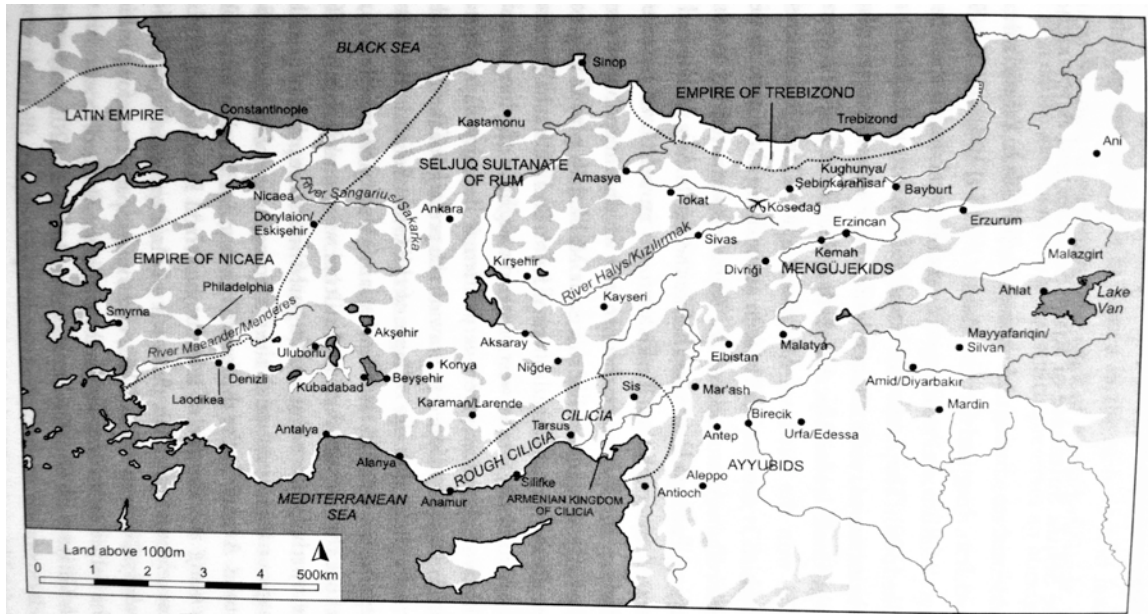


Fig. 2: *The Lands of Rūm and neighboring regions in the early 13th century*³⁶

Broadly speaking, this is a time of migration, dispersion, and displacement, but it is also a time of new beginnings. Our crane’s eye-view allows us to see how the literary landscape is also redrawn during this period, with the simultaneous development of new

³⁶ *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*, eds. A. C. S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 5.

literary languages such as Ottoman Turkish and Middle Armenian.³⁷ Rising on wing, we also find that the literary landscape of Europe is changing as well. If our crane rides the warm air currents westward, we spy Dante Alighieri, exiled from his native Florence, defending a synthetic composite of his own literary vernacular. Across Italy, a translation movement known as *volgarizzamento* has already taken root, bringing a whole spectrum of texts in Latin into a more comprehensible vernacular tongue.

But in the lands of Rūm, it was not translation that led the gharīb to new linguistic shores, but an entirely different mode of literary production. It's hard to see this process occurring from our current altitude, so let's find a grassy area to touch down for the night. We land just outside the city of Konya, the capital of the dynastically Turkic Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm, which has recently become a vassal-state to the Ilkhanate Empire in the east. This is the setting of Chapter One, "A Strange Qur'ān: Constructing an Interpretive Framework in Rūmī's Konya," which examines how Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, a prominent Islamic scholar and practitioner of mystical Islam, attempted to shape his community by recombining a variety of different 'conceptual' languages.

One of Rūmī's primary aims was to draw his greater community into a particular understanding of Islam. However, Konya, which was situated just west of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, consisted of far more than Muslims, but rather was multiethnic and multi-religious in character. Sometimes the dividing lines between these religions were not so clear, though—Rūmī encouraged Christians and Jews to learn from his teachings *and* from their own religions, for instance, even if they would not convert to Islam. For this reason, Rūmī frequently adopted widely accessible literary figures and forms as part

³⁷ It should be noted that by 'literary,' I mean something fairly quotidian here, as in the sense of *letters*: a form of writing which takes into account particular rhetorical and expressive conventions.

of a set of communicative strategies to spread his teachings. In the most oversimplified terms, these strategies had at least two components: first, to communicate in a widely comprehensible manner, primarily by recombining a spectrum of literary conventions which cut not only across social strata, but also various ethnic and religious groups—to speak in a poetic ‘voice’ familiar to many peoples. Second, he labored to introduce knowledge from ‘elsewhere’ which would reveal the ‘inner’ meaning of these enticing literary figures and forms, which in turn helped to foster a particular socio-religious community.

One such figure was the *gharīb*, which not only had a long and storied history in Arabic poetics and theology, but was arguably part of a far-reaching mentalité in Christian and Jewish circles as well, even beyond Anatolia. This chapter argues that the *gharīb*—a single accent within the enticing ‘voice’ of Rūmī’s poetics—consequently reflects this greater attempt to adopt literary figures and forms which would resonate among a wide array of peoples.

Chapter Two, “A Covenant of Strangers: Early Configurations of Literary Turkish,” examines how poets such as Solṭān Valad, Rūmī’s son, attempted to speak this ‘strange voice’ in new ways, reaching communities which could not understand the Persian language of the *Masnavī*. Consequently, like his father, Solṭān Valad adopted a widely resonant manner of communicating. Not only did he attempt to encode ‘colloquial’ Greek and Turkish in the meter and style of his father’s *Masnavī*, but he also drew from particular Greek and Turkish concepts to engage with these communities on their own terms, even while introducing knowledge from ‘elsewhere.’

If we take wing again, flying to other cities in Rūm, we find that Solṭān Valad was not alone in shaping literary Turkish to be locally comprehensible, yet still recognizable according to translocal set of literary standards. Rather, a variety of authors, including ‘Āşık Paşa and Yūnus Emre, also were recombining a spectrum of literary conventions to meet the needs of the Turkish language *and* their own audiences. By tracing the configuration of the gharīb as recognizable across the broader semiotics of Islam, I seek to illuminate how Solṭān Valad, ‘Āşık Paşa, and Yūnus Emre all pursued similar communicative strategies to produce an accessible poetic ‘voice’ for their Turkish speaking publics.

Chapter Three, “‘The Gharib’s Lord is God’: Intersecting Poetics in Middle Armenian,” advances this argument by demonstrating how these literary forms and figures were not circumscribed to the ‘Islamic’ literary world, but rather were revoiced among Armenian communities as well. Particularly after the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia fell to the Mamlūks in 1375, there is a palpable anxiety in the writings of clergymen regarding the disintegration of the Armenian faithful.³⁸ Consequently, during this period, there arose an effort not only to refute Islam, but also to become *competitive* alongside other religious and literary cultures. It is during this period when clergymen and other figures in the Armenian church had a vested interest in utilizing a greater spectrum of literary forms and figures than previously existed in the corpus of Classical Armenian literature.

³⁸ For instance, the first polemical treatise against Islam in Armenian was written by Mattēos Vardapet in 1393, and the second was written by Mattēos’ teacher, Grigor Tat’ewats’i, in 1397. As Seta Dadoyan has observed in her three volume study on Armenians in the world of Islam, these polemics aimed to educate “Armenians who knew very little about the doctrines of either Christianity or Islam.” See Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World: Paradigms of Interaction: Seventh to Fourteenth Centuries*, vol. 3 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2011), 189.

Drifting toward the hazy borderlands of Rūm in the east, we find a variety of Armenian clergymen and lay poets mobilizing the gharīb within alternate interpretive frames, including Christian ones. While the Armenian configuration of the gharīb differs in many important ways from our Persian and Turkish case studies, this poetry still draws from a similar conceptual language—a widely comprehensible and enticing poetic style—in part to communicate with Armenian speakers in terms they understood. By tracing the gharib across a remarkable corpus of poems in Armenian, I seek to contextualize the construction of Middle Armenian poetics as integrated among the greater literary cultures in the lands of Rūm.

We have briefly surveyed a few cities in Rūm, but now it would be worthwhile to ascend again, as high as our wings can take us, in order to understand this literary landscape as part of a cohesive whole. Chapter Four, “The Stranger’s Voice: Mapping the Integrated Literary Cultures of Rūm,” seeks to provide that picture. By contrasting literary production in Rūm with the development of new literary languages elsewhere in the world, I seek to complicate the hierarchical models of “classical” and “vernacular” literary languages which have been utilized to explain similar processes in Europe and South Asia. Instead, I seek to more clearly show how literary conventions and languages of Rūm intersected in different ways, giving rise to cosmopolitan literary forms and figures with no single point of origin, such as the gharīb itself.

Therefore, my intention is not to present an argument about the gharīb specifically, but rather about the literary languages and the societies in which the gharib circulated. The gharib is an especially effective figure for dismantling the insular nature of national literary historiographies, as, by its very nature, the stranger always comes

from ‘elsewhere.’ In a manner of speaking, this is also where many of our literary conventions come from—on foreign ground, borne on the voices of ‘others.’

Consequently, while the arguments of these chapters build towards a particular understanding of Rūm before the Ottoman imperial project fully took root, it is my hope that this study may be of interest to the study of interconnection and integration—not merely comparison—between other literary systems of the premodern world. But for now, let us merely conclude here by noting that our crane is rising on wing again, and the first of our gharībs is calling out to us, in a sweet and enticing voice, from the country below.

Chapter One

A Strange Qur'ān: Constructing an Interpretive Framework in Rūmī's Konya

The speech of each of you brings trouble and division;
My speech brings you concord.
So you be silent and give ear:
So that I become your tongue in our conversation.

—Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, responding to an argument over the word for ‘grapes’
between a Persian, an Arab, a Turk, and a Greek in the second book of the
*Maṣnavī*³⁹

“Creatures follow their own kind; a voice will answer to the voice that is like
itself,” said the stranger; “this has been the rule of Heaven since time began.”⁴⁰

—The Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi (fl. 350 - 300 B.C.E.)

³⁹ Translations are my own unless otherwise noted. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Maṣnavī-ye Ma'navī*, ed. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1984), 455.

1. Introduction

We begin on a night in Konya, the capital of the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm in what today is southern Turkey, sometime around the year 1260, when Ḥosām al-Dīn Chalabī went out looking for his master, the Islamic preacher and jurist Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī. Chalabī was perhaps troubled, but above all he wanted answers. He had recently learned that his companions, also followers of Rūmī, had been utterly dazzled by three challenging works of Persian poetry — the *Elāhī-nāma* of Sanā'ī [d. 1131] and the *Manteq al-teyr* and *Moṣibat-nāma* of 'Aṭṭār [d. 1221]. Chalabī had been spellbound as well; it was the “style of strange [*gharīb*] meanings that caused them to wonder,” even though such lofty “secrets” skated just beyond the cusp of their understanding.⁴¹

Knowing that opportunities pass like the passing of clouds, Chalabī met with Rūmī in private and, lowering his head, addressed his teacher. After praising Rūmī's *Dīvān* of poetry as world-encompassing, even bridging realms as disparate as east and west, Chalabī began to argue that Rūmī had surpassed even the works of the old masters. Finally, Chalabī arrived at his point: “If there were a book in the mode [*tarz*]⁴² of the *Elāhī-nāma* of Ḥakīm [Sanā'ī] but in the meter [*vazn*]⁴³ of the *Manteq al-teyr*,” the light of Rūmī's mind would make such extraordinary or “strange meanings” clear for the

⁴⁰ Zhuangzi, *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 272.

⁴¹ Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-'ārefīn*, ed. T. Yazıcı, vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1959), 740.

⁴² Here, '*tarz*' could also be translated quite generally as "fashion" or "manner" or even simply as "form."

⁴³ Likewise, '*vazn*,' which has another meaning of 'weight,' could be rendered either very specifically as "meter" or "measure," or more figuratively as something akin to "importance" or "influence."

benefit of all humankind. It would be, Chalabī concluded, “a great kindness and compassion.”⁴⁴

Rūmī, never one to miss a beat, immediately removed a strip from the top of his turban, unwound it, and placed it in Chalabī’s outstretched palm. The strip, Rūmī’s hagiographer Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Aflākī would later report, “explained the secrets of universals [*kollīyyāt*] and particulars [*joz’īyyāt*]” which Chalabī’s autodidact companions had not grasped. What Chalabī found there were the first couplets of what would become Rūmī’s masterpiece, the *Masnavī-ye Ma’navī*, comprising a staggering 25,577 lines.⁴⁵ It was the beginning of what would become one of the most widely read and celebrated works in all of Persian literature, itself generative of many more “strange meanings.”

In a similar manner, this chapter proposes to illuminate some of the ‘universals’ and ‘particulars’ of Rūmī’s own literary production, which, as I will argue, served to construct a widely comprehensible interpretive framework for the heterogeneous peoples of Rūm. As this chapter will demonstrate, Rūmī was highly sensitive to the multiple horizons of expectation and comprehension levels of his polyvocal interpretive community in Konya, which included a wide variety of Muslims, Christians (including Greeks and Armenians), Jews, and others.⁴⁶ To make matters even more complex, his

⁴⁴ Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-‘ārefīn*, vol. 2, 740.

⁴⁵ This number comes from Nicholson’s critical edition, although Este‘lāmī’s edition contains fifty-three additional lines. The title ‘*Masnavī-ye Ma’navī*’ is sometimes translated as “Rhyming couplets of spiritual meaning.”

⁴⁶ Throughout this chapter, I follow Ethel Sara Wolper in using the term “interpretive community” to describe different audiences in premodern Rūm, although the term was developed by Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980). It should be noted that my intention here is not to adopt all of the ways Fish employed the term, but rather to evoke the general sense that “meanings are the property neither of fixed and stable texts nor of free and independent readers but of interpretive communities that are responsible both for the shape of a reader’s activities and for the texts those activities produce” (Ibid., 322). I find it productive to understand Rūmī’s own “interpretive community” as revolving around -- although definitely not limited to or confined by -- the community he was shaping through the state-sponsored khāneqāh in Konya. As we will see, Rūmī’s engagement with the heterogeneous community of Konya, as well as

multilingual and multi-religious city was further divided by both literati and the illiterate from different social classes. Any attempt to shape this heterogeneous milieu would have to balance a wide variety of concerns, literary conventions, and conceptual languages to be effective.

In fact, as this tale indicates, Rūmī was highly aware of the need to communicate in terms which his audiences could understand; consequently, he aimed to introduce translocal discourses on Islam via locally accessible literary forms, figures, and narratives. Many of these literary adaptations are quite well known: as the great Iranian scholar Badī' al-Zamān Forūzānfar has discovered, 264 of the 275 stories mentioned by the headings of the *Masnavī* are essentially reinterpretations of other source material. However, while this chapter draws from the swelling ocean of scholarship on Rūmī,⁴⁷ it also is distinguished from these other studies on appropriation in terms of its approach and scope, which is both narrow and highly specific. Rather than examine the relationships between Rūmī and the heterogeneous peoples of Konya *or* trace the literary relationships between the *Masnavī* and the multitudinous sources which inform it, my focus here concerns the configuration of a single figure which crosses between both society and literature: the stranger, or *gharīb*. The *gharīb*, I will suggest, was part of

visitors or 'strangers' within that city, leaves reason to believe that his own 'interpretive community' was more porous than simply an audience of likeminded disciples or patrons. At the same time, my general reading of an 'interpretive community' also leaves open the question of what 'texts' that community found value in, unlike other productive terms such as "textual communities," which Martin Irvine loosely defines as "formed by the two dimensions of the social function of texts, which are as inseparable as the two sides of a sheet of parchment – a received canon of texts and an interpretive methodology articulated in a body of commentary which accompanied the texts and instituted their authority," in his work, *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory, 350-1100*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 15. As I will argue, the 'texts' which Rūmī engaged, or his methods of interpretation, themselves span many languages, strata of society, and periods of time.

⁴⁷ For instance, over 500 M.A. and Ph.D. theses were written on Rūmī in Iran since the 1970s alone. See *Mowlavi Studies at Iranian Universities: M.A. and Ph.D. Level Dissertations*, ed. Mahdi Mohabati (Tehran: Institute for Social and Cultural Studies, 2007).

Rūmī's greater project of constructing a widely comprehensible interpretive framework which would cut laterally across different literary conventions, religions, and languages.

As I will argue in this chapter, the little-studied figure of the stranger deserves our attention for at least two reasons: first, it occupies a prominent place in Islamic and especially Ṣūfī thought; second, the concept of the stranger is obviously not limited to the domain of Islam, but rather was part of a greater episteme in the premodern world. For instance, the majorly influential al-Jonayd (d. 910), who advocated for a more austere practice of Ṣūfism, considered John the Baptist to be the paradigmatic *gharīb* and a model all Ṣūfīs should follow to attain union with God. What made John the Baptist, who is the prophet Yaḥyā in the Qur'ān, a *gharīb*? Namely, the same things he is known for in Christianity: renouncing society and living as an outcast among his own people. Nor is this entirely surprising—few, if any, societies are untouched by the presence of 'others,' and the trope of the mysterious stranger as a possessor of *hidden* authority appears in premodern literatures and religious traditions from around the world.

Despite the fact that the premodern world teemed with strangers in countless forms and roles, there has been relatively little scholarly attention devoted to this figure, or to the ways in which the *gharīb* has bridged (or divided) disparate interpretive communities. However, rather than focus on the history of an idea or the cultural underpinnings of an idea, what the Germans termed *Geistesgeschichte*, this chapter seeks to address a problem with altogether different stakes: mainly, how we ought to conceptualize the complex intersections and interconnections between different literatures and peoples in the premodern world. Consequently, by tracing the configuration of the *gharīb* in Konya, this chapter will begin to present the argument that

Rūmī understood the ‘rewriting’ or ‘recombination’ of different literary conventions as a dynamic and connective act, not only between disparate texts and literary languages, but more importantly, between the heterogeneous peoples living within a shared geographic space. Rūmī wanted, above all, to communicate with the Muslim and non-Muslim populations around Konya through a widely accessible interpretive framework, sometimes on terms which were already familiar to his diverse audiences. In so doing, he not only had to adapt translocal Ṣūfī and Islamic discourses to his own religious mission in the lands of Rūm, but also to make his teachings resonate with the peoples of Rūm in a unifying, but not homogenous, manner.

The microcosm of Rūmī’s adaptation of the ‘gharīb’ can better help us understand the macrocosm of the multilingual literary landscape of premodern Rūm, in other words, especially when layered against configurations of the gharīb in other languages besides Persian and Arabic, as I will argue in subsequent chapters. This chapter serves to establish a cornerstone of that greater argument, both in my examination of how Rūmī understood the gharīb and conveyed his understanding to a multi-religious community, but also in demonstrating that the multifaceted ‘gharīb’ has more than a single genesis even within Rūmī’s own literary production.

My focus here is on three units of analysis: first, I will provide some necessary background information on Rūmī’s engagement with his interpretive community, as well as his audience’s reception of ‘translocal’ texts. Secondly, I will examine how Rūmī’s family and followers reconfigured the gharīb out of an episteme which informed not only commentary on the Ḥadīth, but also Christian and Jewish theology. Finally, I will demonstrate how the gharībs in Rūmī’s *Masnavī* are religiously and epistemically

‘connective’ figures, capable of bringing multiple peoples into a mutually intelligible framework—an enticing poetic ‘voice’ which could appeal to diverse audiences. In so doing, I will argue that Rūmī not only incorporated the gharīb into widely resonant narrative and literary forms, but furthermore, that this multivalent gharīb would have been easily comprehensible, and broadly accessible, to a variety of Muslims and non-Muslims in the land of Rūm.

2. Constructing a Mutually Comprehensible Interpretive Framework in Konya

Before we can investigate Rūmī’s interpretation of a vast discourse on strangers and strangeness, first we need to address the context of Rūmī’s literary production within the cosmopolitan city of Konya, a bustling metropolis populated by Persians, Armenians, Turks, Greeks, Arabs, Kurds, Jews, and others. In this section, I will broadly examine how Rūmī engaged with his interpretative community, which included not only his immediate companions, but also potential Muslim and non-Muslim followers. At the risk of oversimplification, this section provides an introduction to how Rūmī instructed his audience about Islam through at least two basic approaches: one approach aimed to communicate in a highly resonant, locally accessible manner, while the other aimed to appropriate and rewrite the canonical texts of Islam alongside other translocal literary works in Persian.⁴⁸ Both of these strategies have direct implications for how we ought to

⁴⁸ In scholarship on Rūmī in general, it has been extensively established that Rūmī blended a combination of ‘folk and elite’ traditions in his own literary production. For an overview of potential

conceptualize ‘interconnection’ between various Anatolian literatures and societies, not to mention Rūmī’s specific appropriation of the gharīb which I will examine in the following sections of this chapter.

If we are to understand the recombination of different literary conventions as an act which can shape a community, then first we ought to understand the religious figures who were doing this shaping, as well as why multiple adaptations from local cultures and translocal literatures were necessary to achieve this undertaking. To this end, it is important to keep in mind that Rūmī’s emergence as a major religious figure in Rūm was part of a larger religious and social transformation across the Islamic world. It was during the 12th and 13th centuries when the teachings of different charismatic Ṣūfī masters were established, later to be institutionalized by subsequent followers across Rūm, the Near East, and even Northern India.⁴⁹ Particularly in the case of Rūm, regional sovereigns not

Arabic and Persian sources which Rūmī utilized in his composition of the *Maṣnavī* see especially Badī‘ al-Zamān Furūzānfar, *Ma’ākhaz-e Qaṣaṣ va Tamsīlāt-e Maṣnavī* (Tehran: Dāneshgāh-e Tehrān, 1954). For a more recent overview of the ‘popular’ dimension and cultures of the ‘common’ people in Rūmī’s literary production, see also Gholām Moḥammad Ṭayyebī, “Farhang-e ‘Āmma Dar Maṣnavī-ye Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī” (PhD diss., Shahīd Chamrān University, 1995); and also Maḥbūba Mobāsherī, *Farhang-e ‘Āmma Dar Maṣnavī* (Tehran: Sāzmān-e Chāp va Enteshārāt, 2010).

⁴⁹ While charismatic Ṣūfī leaders certainly existed prior to this period, frequently the followers of such figures would disband or regroup after the death of their leader. However, the 12th and 13th centuries oversaw a dramatic transformation in how the ‘way’ of these Ṣūfī teachers were preserved and constructed to endure across space and time. As Erik S. Ohlander observes at the beginning of *Sufism in an Age of Transition: ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods*, “Over the course of the 6th/12th and early-7th/13th centuries, a not entirely disparate group of charismatic Ṣūfī masters began to emerge across the Abode of Islam: ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166) and Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī (d. 578/1182) in Iraq, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā in Transoxiana (d. 617/1220), Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī (d. 633/1236) in India, Abū’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258) in North Africa, and, in the heart of the old imperial capital of Baghdad, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī (539–632/1144 or 1145–1234). Although each of these Ṣūfīs had much in common, their most significant affinity lay in their names being ever thereafter inextricably linked with a complex of social, religious, and cultural trends subsumed under the rubric of what is generally identified as a fundamental institution of Islamic mysticism following the Mongol invasions of the 7th/13th century: the Ṣūfī order, or ṭarīqa (pl. ṭuruq), particular ‘initiatory ways’ associated with the teachings of an eponymous Ṣūfī master reflexively ‘passed down’ by his spiritual, and in no small number of cases blood, heirs to their own confraternity of disciples and, in an oftentimes divaricating fashion, they to theirs in a manner strikingly similar to the Zen Buddhist lineages of pre- and early-modern Japan or the *shoshalot* of the Hasidim.” See Erik S. Ohlander, *Sufism in an Age of Transition: ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 1. For cogent studies on Ṣūfism’s beginnings and subsequent development, see also Ahmet T. Karamustafa,

only patronized these charismatic Ṣūfī masters to help cultivate their own religious and cultural prestige, but also to help integrate a heterogeneous influx of immigrants into society after the Mongol invasions. The Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm invited Rūmī’s father, a religious scholar from Khorāsān, to preach and organize a following in Konya before those invasions for similar reasons. However, it was during the waning of Saljūq power, as Anatolia became a frontier of the Ilkhanids,⁵⁰ when Rūmī especially was tasked with knitting together multiple linguistic, ethnic, and religious worlds into a cohesive vision for a new religious community.

The need to effectively reinterpret translocal religious discourses to meet the needs of heterogeneous local audiences is represented not only by ‘Ṣūfī’ literary production at this period in time, but also in the institutional structures of these charismatic Ṣūfī masters themselves. A great deal of cross-cultural contact and exchange occurred around the institution of the khāneqāh, or Ṣūfī hospice, which created a communal center for prayer and religious discussion, provided a space for engaging with visitors and strangers, and offered lodging for travelers and food for the poor. As Ethel Sara Wolper has demonstrated, not only were a record number of Ṣūfī hospices founded during the 13th century in Anatolia, but these lodges transformed urban spaces by providing “each community with a geographic and spiritual center” in a region “undergoing rapid transformation by large numbers of immigrants and a breakdown of

Sufism: The Formative Period (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200-1550* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006); and also Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History*, Blackwell Brief Histories of Religion (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

⁵⁰ For the groundbreaking study of Anatolia as a Mongol frontier, see Sara Nur Yildiz, "Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Saljūq Anatolia: The Politics of Conquest and History Writing, 1243-1282" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2006).

central authority.”⁵¹ In a real way, the khāneqāh had to speak not just the language, but the *languages* of the people in order to achieve this massive undertaking. Wolper demonstrates that such lodges even acquired Christian followers and “incorporated Christian rituals into their devotional practices⁵²” in Rūm at this time.⁵³

Rūmī’s engagement with his own interpretive community speaks to a similar symbiotic relationship between the diverse peoples of Konya within the khāneqāh and beyond it. For instance, Rūmī’s ‘hagiographer’ Aflākī presents many reports about the Armenians, Greeks, and Turks who either numbered among Rūmī’s followers or were simply drawn to him without converting to Islam. In fact, Rūmī frequently sought out Christians and Jews during his mission in Konya, greeting them in the marketplace, conversing with monks, and even defending the actions of non-believers, such as in the case of a drunk who accidentally burst upon a religious ceremony.⁵⁴ Such engagements with both Muslims and non-Muslims are further reflected in Rūmī’s literary production and sermons.⁵⁵ For instance, Annemarie Schimmel has suggested that Rūmī frequently

⁵¹ Ethel Sara Wolper, *Cities and Saints: Sufism and the Transformation of Urban Space in Medieval Anatolia* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 1-2.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵³ Along similar lines, Wolper posits that in many Anatolian cities, the “symbiotic relationship among dervishes, non-Muslims, and Turkmen groups gave the dervish lodge prominence within the city,” a relationship which, due to state and demographic pressures, quite literally incorporated ‘strangers’ institutionally into a newly reimagined urban space. *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵⁴ Rūmī had similar relations, it seems, with the Jewish community in Konya as well. For example, Rūmī’s son reported that “one day a Jew from among their rabbis met Mowlānā [Rūmī] by chance. He said: “Is our religion better or is your religion better?” Mowlānā replied: “Your religion.” The Jew immediately became a Muslim.” See Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Aflākī, *The Feats of the Knowers of God: Manāqeb al-‘ārefīn*, trans. John O’Kane (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 333.

⁵⁵ For instance, Moḥammad Este’lāmī has drawn attention to the Hellenistic tradition in Rūmī’s writings, such as the parable of a man searching for a ‘true person’ by carrying a lamp in broad daylight, which is an adaptation of the legend about Diogenes the Cynic. (See Moḥammad Este’lāmī, “Rumi and the Universality of His Message,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 14, no. 4 (2003): 432). Numerous scholars have also commented on the Rūmī’s knowledge of other religions. See especially John Renard, *All the King’s Falcons: Rumi on Prophets and Revelation* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1994); Qamar Ārīyan, *Chehra-ye Masīḥ Dar Adabīyāt-e Fārsī* (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Mo‘īn, 1990); Annemarie Schimmel, “Jesus and Mary as Poetical Images in Rumi’s Verse,” in *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadī‘ Zaydān Ḥaddād (Gainesville: University Press of

blurred the confessional lines between religions, such as in his portrayal of the Annunciation of Christ in the *Masnavī*, which she argues “could be easily taken to be a piece of Christian devotional literature.”⁵⁶ Nor did Rūmī’s followers always join his religion: while Rūmī clearly championed Islam, he also asserted that those who were *fearful* [*tarsā*, also meaning Christian] or unable to take the religion of Moḥammad should still cling to Jesus and learn to renounce the world.⁵⁷

In order for Rūmī to draw these diverse peoples into a new spiritual and urban center, he had to communicate in the conceptual ‘languages’ of his heterogeneous audiences. At the same time, this opened the door for non-Muslims to respond to Rūmī’s teachings according to their own understanding, which caused some ire among Rūmī’s other followers. However, as the following discourse by Rūmī makes clear, he wanted non-Muslims to engage with his teachings on their own terms:

One day I was speaking to a large crowd among whom there were a number of unbelievers. As I spoke, they were weeping and extremely emotional, overcome by ecstasy. [You] ask, “What can they understand and what do they know about it? Even among Moslems only one among a thousand understands this kind of talk. What did they understand of it that they were weeping so?” [I] reply that it is not necessary for them to understand the exact words, they can understand the spirit behind them.⁵⁸

Florida, 1995), 143-57; and Leonard Lewisohn, “The Esoteric Christianity of Islam: Interiorisation of Christian Imagery in Medieval Persian Sūfī Poetry,” in *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, ed. Lloyd V. J. Ridgeon (Richmond: Curzon, 2001), 127-56. For an extensive bibliography on the relationship between Rūmī and Christianity, see Leonard Lewisohn, “Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 4 (1200-1350)*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden : Palo Alto: Brill, 2010), 491-508.

⁵⁶ Schimmel has additionally demonstrated that Rūmī’s *Dīvān* even contains an allusion to the Gospel of Matthew, urging the faithful to turn the other cheek when someone strikes your face. Annemarie Schimmel, “Christian Influences in Persian Poetry,” in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 2011, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/christianity-vii>

⁵⁷ Aflākī, *The Feats of the Knowers of God*, translated by John O’Kane, 328-329

⁵⁸ Quoted from Franklin Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West: The Life, Teaching and Poetry of Jalāl al-Din Rumi* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 127.

Rūmī makes it clear that interpretation is a *communal* activity, and certainly not limited to the confines of a supposedly esoteric discourse. However, we ought to remember that Rūmī’s greater interpretive community did not only comprise Christians, Jews, and Muslims, but even more importantly, the literati, such as the Saljūq elite and those who attended the madrasa, as well as the uneducated and illiterate, which included Muslims and non-Muslims alike. One of the challenges facing Rūmī was therefore to communicate with these audiences in terms which had broad cultural, literary, and religious currency, even blending supposedly distinct folk and elite cultures and traditions.⁵⁹ It was through this practice of using familiar form to reinterpret translocal knowledge, and vice-versa, that Rūmī began to populate a wide array concepts, themes, and literary forms with new meaning.

Rūmī also participated in this ‘communal’ dimension of interpretation and meaning-making by reinterpreting the meaning of widespread literary forms and other basic terms from everyday life. For example, Aflākī reports that one day Rūmī was reciting a sexually explicit quatrain that was favored by “female prostitutes in Arab lands.⁶⁰” When questioned on the meaning of the poem, which concerned buying sexual favors from prostitutes, Rūmī ignored the literal dimension of the words and instead interpreted their ‘inner’ meaning as a commentary on the cost of spiritual poverty⁶¹, much

⁵⁹ As Ahmet Karamustafa, Reuven Amitai-Preiss, Devin DeWeese and Ethel Sara Wolper have argued, Šūfī piety cannot be neatly divided into “folk and elite traditions,” which is essentially the model proposed by the father of modern Saljūq historiography, Mehmed Fuad Köprülü. See Wolper, *Cities and Saints*, 6.

⁶⁰ Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-‘ārefīn*, vol. 1, 109.

⁶¹ This practice is also reflected in the composition of the *Masnavī*, as Rūmī similarly composed several stories of an explicitly sexual nature which likewise signified ‘higher’ spiritual meanings. Annemarie Schimmel has characterized these tales as “a very fascinating way of getting the audience’s interest,” but a large body of other scholars, such as Reynold Nicholson, Moḥammad Este’lāmī, ‘Abd al-

as his audiences interpreted his words according to their own religious idioms. By a similar token, Rūmī also adapted commonplace Turkish expressions as mystical signifiers in disguise. One report depicts how Rūmī overheard a Turkish seller of fox-skins [*delkū*] shouting “delkū, delkū!” in the streets. In Persian, “del kū” homophonically means “where is the heart?” Rūmī reportedly wandered home, marveling over the phrase and repeating “del kū” to himself as he contemplated the inner spiritual (Persian) meaning of a Turkish word.⁶² Nor was Rūmī alone in unveiling the ‘inner meaning’ of quotidian marketplace terminology; his son, Solṭān Valad, continued to appropriate and reinterpret Turkish and Greek economic vocabularies to compose his *Rabāb-nāma* [*Book of the Rebec*], which similarly revealed ‘higher meanings’ in widely resonant and familiar terms.

Most significantly, this practice of communicating in a widely resonant manner also constituted an important dimension of Rūmī’s literary production. Rūmī plainly states that upon returning from his education abroad in Damascus, when he assumed the mantle of his father in Konya, he found that the peoples of Rūm had difficulty understanding many of his teachings. As the following passage makes clear, Rūmī learned to make translocal Ṣūfī discourses more resonant on a local level once he understood the ‘temperament’ of his interpretive community:

Ḥosayn Zarrīn’kūb, and Moḥammad Taqī Ja‘farī have largely dismissed these tales as either being improper, impious, or in Zarrīn’kūb’s case, merely reflective of the bawdry taste of the common people. (See Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalāloddīn Rūmī* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 51; Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, edited and translated by Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, vol. 6 (London: Luzac & co., 1925), vii; Moḥammad Este‘lāmī, *Masnavī: Muqaddima va Tahlīl*, vol. 5 (Tehran: Zavvār, 1991) 281; ‘Abd al-Ḥosayn Zarrīn’kūb, *Sirr-e Nay: Naqd va Sharḥ-e Tahlīlī va Taṭbīqī-e Masnavī*, vol. 1 (Tehran: ‘Elmī, 1985), 298; and Moḥammad Taqī Ja‘farī, *Tafsīr va Naqd va Tahlīl-e Masnavī*, vol. 11 (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Eslāmī, 1987), 474. The defining work on the subject is Mahdi Tourage’s *Rūmī and the Hermeneutics of Eroticism*, which plumbs the nexus between esoteric knowledge and eroticism in Rūmī’s *Masnavī*, in essence taking seriously the hermeneutic dimension of these stories as mystical signifiers in their own right. See Mahdi Tourage, *Rūmī and the Hermeneutics of Eroticism* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill), 2007.

And as we observed that in no way were they drawn to God [*ḥaqq*] and that they were lacking of divine secrets, through the elegance of *samāʿ* and poetry of metrical verse — which happened to agree with the temperament of the people [*ka ṭebāʿ-e mardom rā movāfeq āftāda āst*] — we gave them these ‘meanings’ in a way suitable to them, because the people of Rūm were musicians and had a penchant for expression.⁶³

He further likens this discovery to the realization of a doctor who, after learning that his patient doesn’t enjoy the taste of medicine, blends his remedies with a sweeter concoction. In this light, it isn’t surprising that Rūmī’s son was one of the first authors in Rūm to compose and write poetry in Turkish: the very mission and future legacy of what would become the Mowlavī order depended on the ability to reveal ‘translocal’ meaning in a locally comprehensible (or at least accessible) manner, whether that manner entailed the adoption of a particular literary language, form, or even popular topics and tropes. In each of these cases, which I present here as part of a broad overview, Rūmī was keen to communicate in a manner which would give his teachings high exposure among Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Furthermore, as our previous example suggests, he did so by letting his audience broadly engage with his teachings, even when they could not always understand the meaning of the “exact words.”

At the same time, as mentioned previously, Rūmī adapted not only locally resonant literary figures and forms to make his own teachings accessible, but he also shaped how his interpretive community received and interpreted major ‘translocal’ texts, such as the Qurʾān, Ḥadīth, or the poetry of Sanāʿī and ʿAṭṭār. As he did with the ‘popular’ dimension of his literary and epistemic production, he rewrote these works

⁶² Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-ʿārefīn*, vol. 1, 356.

within the framework of his own *Masnavī*, blending a variety of different literary conventions with other discourses in Arabic and Persian. In some ways, both of these approaches to shaping the interpretive community within Konya should be understood as two sides of the same coin, as I will show here.

Perhaps most notable is Rūmī's appropriation and reinterpretation of the Qur'ān.⁶⁴ As 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī (d. 1492) reportedly noted, the *Masnavī* is "the Qur'ān in Persian," and it seems that Rūmī held the same opinion. Certainly, the *Masnavī* cites and interprets the Qur'ān more extensively even than many other didactic *masnavīs*.⁶⁵ This led to the mistaken impression among Rūmī's followers that the *Masnavī* was simply an exegesis of the Qur'ān, which Rūmī vehemently rebutted. Instead, Rūmī shaped the ways in which his interpretive community received *both* texts, as he argued that the *Masnavī* ultimately performed the same function as the Qur'ān, but revealed 'meaning' in a different manner:

One of the companions complained to my honorable father [Rūmī]: "The scholars were debating with me: 'Why do they call the *Masnavī* the Qur'ān?' I answered that it is the exegesis [*tafsīr*] of the Qur'ān." Verily, my father was silent a moment; then he bellowed: "Oh [you] dog! Why should it not be [the Qur'ān]! Oh

⁶³ Ibid., 207-208.

⁶⁴ Or, to be more exact, Rūmī's appropriation of the large and diverse body of commentary on the Qur'ān, as well as from the "stories of the prophets" genre of Islamic literature. For a general introduction to Rūmī's widespread knowledge of major works in both Arabic and Persian, see Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West*, 287-291.

⁶⁵ As Jawid Mojaddedi notes, while didactic *masnavīs* in Persian typically cite the Arabic text of the Qur'ān, Rūmī's own practice of citation remains distinct in some respects, partly because he incorporated many more Arabic citations overall than other authors such as Sanā'ī and 'Aṭṭār. Mojaddedi further observes that "while 'Aṭṭār's *Asrār-nāma* contains a citation from the Qur'ān approximately every 250 couplets and Sanā'ī's *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa* every 150 couplets, Rūmī's *Masnavī* contains a Qur'ānic citation on average every 30 couplets." For Mojaddedi's discussion on the relationship between the *Masnavī* and the Qur'ān, see Jawid Mojaddedi, "Rūmī," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān*, edited by Andrew Rippin (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008), 362-72. See also Nargis Virani, "'I Am the Nightingale of the Merciful': Rumi's Use of the Qur'ān and Hadith," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 22, no. 1 (2002): 100-111.

jackass! Why should it not be [the Qur'ān]? Oh [brother of a] whore! Why should it not be [the Qur'ān]!⁶⁶

According to Rūmī, because the speech of God precedes human language, it ultimately doesn't matter whether a text is "Syriac, whether it is the 'seven oft-repeated verses' [sab' al-maṣānī] of the Qur'ān,⁶⁷ whether it be Hebrew, or whether it be Arabic."⁶⁸ In other words, because any text has the potential to reveal spiritual meanings *as well or better than* the Qur'ān, Rūmī did not consider himself beholden to a specific rhetorical genre or literary language in communicating such 'meaning' to his own community. The implication here is that Rūmī could freely adapt a variety of literary forms and figures to address his audience in the most effective manner possible.

Rūmī also placed a premium on the works of 'Aṭṭār and Sanā'ī over the Qur'ān for similar reasons, as these maṣnavīs provided a framework for interpreting 'higher secrets' through poetic forms which were 'suitable' to the peoples of Rūm, who "had a penchant" for musical and poetic expression.⁶⁹ Not surprisingly, this attitude also caused

⁶⁶ Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-ārefīn*, vol. 1, 291.

⁶⁷ John O'Kane, who is Aflākī's translator into English, notes that the "sab' al-maṣānī" has many meanings, although probably refers to the opening sūra of the Qur'ān here. See Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Aflākī, *The Feats of the Knowers of God*, trans. John O'Kane, 721.

⁶⁸ Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-ārefīn*, vol. 1, 291.

⁶⁹ For example, Rūmī declared that one should study Sanā'ī and 'Aṭṭār if one wants to unlock the mystery of the *Maṣnavī*: "Whoever busies themselves with the words [*sokhanān*] of 'Aṭṭār shall profit from the words of Ḥakīm [Sanā'ī] and reach an understanding of the secrets of that speech. And whoever studies the words of Sanā'ī in complete seriousness shall be aware of the luminous secret of our words" (Ibid., 220). In another prominent report, Ḥosām al-Dīn Chalabī was fearful of having his student take the oath upon the Qur'ān, so instead he brought out a copy of the *Elāhī-nāma* by Sanā'ī for the student to swear upon. Just then, Rūmī entered the room and asked what was happening. When he learned that the student was about to take an oath upon the *Elāhī-nāma*, he declared "By God, this is an even stronger [oath], since the form of the Qur'ān is like yogurt, and these meanings [of the *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa*] are the butter and cream of it" (Ibid., 222).

However, while Rūmī labored to bring the works of Sanā'ī and 'Aṭṭār within the same interpretive framework as his own literary production, these authors wrote for widely divergent audiences and purposes. For instance, even though Sanā'ī wrote didactic maṣnavīs whose resonance in subsequent 'mystical' works of Persian literature cannot be understated, his patronage came from the Ghaznavīd court. As J. T. P. de Bruijn has observed, there is "little historical evidence" to substantiate the view that Sanā'ī was a prominent Ṣūfī, and Julie Meisami has likewise suggested that Sanā'ī wrote 'mystical' ghazals

some controversy in Konya, and Aflākī reports that Rūmī sometimes had to defend Sanā'ī, as well as his own literary production, to other prominent literati. For instance, the poet Amīr Bahā' al-Dīn-e Qāne'ī supposedly challenged Rūmī by stating that he “never liked Sanā'ī for the reason that he was not a Muslim.”⁷⁰ When Rūmī asked in what sense Sanā'ī wasn't a Muslim, Qāne'ī replied: “Because he has incorporated [*taẓmīn*] āyāts from the Great Qur'ān into his poetry and made them into rhymes.” It is worth noting that Qāne'ī did not take issue with the content of the *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa* as much as with its versification of the Qur'ān, which is considered the direct speech of God and therefore not translatable, let alone open to revision through Persian poetry.⁷¹ Rūmī responded with a characteristically fierce rebuke, noting that because Qāne'ī was content [*qāne'ī*] with external appearances, he did not realize that Sanā'ī's works were a commentary “on the secrets of the Qur'ān” because he drew from the sea [*baḥr*] of the Qur'ān and poured it into the meter [*baḥr*] of poetry. Qāne'ī reportedly repented on the spot and became a devoted follower of Rūmī.

insofar as they expounded on spiritual tropes already found in the ethics of court poetry. See J. T. P. de Bruijn, “Sāna'ī,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*, online edition, 2012, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sana-i-poet>; and see also Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 152. At the same time, Franklin Lewis has productively observed that while Sanā'ī's patrons were Islamic scholars, that did not limit the circulation of Sanā'ī's works to those groups. See Franklin Dean Lewis, “Reading, Writing and Recitation: Sanā'ī and the Origins of the Persian Ghazal” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1995.). Anatolian Šūfī hospices certainly were less predisposed to read Sanā'ī as expounding on ethics of the court (as does Meisami) than on commenting upon a religious code of ethics or spiritual chivalry. By the same token, although 'Aṭṭār wrote at a closer time to Rūmī's own literary activity and considered himself in some respect to be a Šūfī (or in B. Reinert's phrasing, a “theoretician of mysticism”), he was neither very prominent during his own lifetime, nor did he enjoy patronage as did Rūmī or Sanā'ī. Instead, 'Aṭṭār supported himself as a pharmacist, enjoying minor renown in Nīshāpūr, the city where he was born and where he died in 1221 during a violent invasion of Mongol forces. See B. Reinert, “'Aṭṭār, Farīd-al-Dīn,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*, online edition, 2011, www.iranicaonline.org/articles/attar-farid-al-din-poet.

⁷⁰ Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-'ārefīn*, vol. 1, 221.

⁷¹ Of course, as noted previously, Qur'ānic citation is a rather standard practice in the didactic-mystical maṣnavī genre. This story is perhaps more reflective of a certain type of attitude that Rūmī and his followers were trying to push against rather than indicative of an actual confrontation between Rūmī and Qāne'ī.

These ‘appropriations’ of translocal Arabic and Persian texts served at least two major purposes for Rūmī. First, such acts of appropriation created a particular textual and spiritual genealogy in which the secrets of the Qur’ān were fulfilled in Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī, and the secrets of Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī were fulfilled in the *Maṣnavī*. The obvious implication here is that Rūmī considered his own work to be more important for his mission in Konya than even sacred and canonical texts of Islam. Secondly, by privileging Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī over even the Qur’ān, Rūmī was able to preach (what he interpreted as) the higher meaning of sacred texts in Islam, but to do so by using widely resonant metrical, musical, and narrative forms, just as Sanā’ī incorporated [*taẓmīn*] āyāts from the Qur’ān and made them into rhymes.⁷² For Rūmī, the importance of this work could not be overstated: quite literally, his ability to foster a new religious community in Konya relied on communicating with the multiple peoples of Rūm ‘in a way that suited them’—through a widely comprehensible interpretive framework and enticing musical and literary form. Consequently, while Rūmī may have interpreted ‘Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī’s “strange meanings” as transhistorical, his engagement with them, as well as his need to write a new *maṣnavī*

⁷² A recent hypothesis by Seyed Ghahreman Safavi and S. C. R. Weightman has further posited that Rūmī’s relationship to these authors may run deeper than the appropriation of particular rhymes, overall literary style, or individual literary figures, but potentially even informed the structure of the six books of the *Maṣnavī*. In particular, Safavi and Weightman suggest that the *Maṣnavī* shares the same underlying analogical structure with ‘Aṭṭār’s own *Elāhī-nāma*. For instance, ‘Aṭṭār states that he structured the six sections of his poem through an allegorical frame story in which a Caliph asks his six sons to tell him their deepest desires. ‘Aṭṭār then provides the key to understanding what each of the sons (and sections) represent: selfhood or ego (*nafs*), the devil (*ebliš*), intellect (*‘aql*), knowledge (*‘elm*), spiritual poverty (*faqr*), and Unity or Oneness with God (*tawhīd*). The sons essentially represent different, yet entirely basic, spiritual stations which the self must pass through to become a more disciplined practitioner in Ṣūfī expressions of Islam. Whether or not one finds Safavi and Weightman’s argument to be convincing that these spiritual stations are reflected in the six books of the *Maṣnavī*, Rūmī and his successors undeniably ascribed great importance to Sanā’ī and ‘Aṭṭār in the construction of a spiritual and literary genealogy for Rūmī, and part of these genealogy was encoded right in the very ‘meter and mode’ of the *Maṣnavī* itself. See Seyed Ghahreman Safavi and S. C. R. Weightman, *Rumi’s Mystical Design: Reading the Mathnawi, Book One* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009).

which would make their works comprehensible to his disciples, suggests he was highly sensitive to the affect of time and place on one's ability to access those higher truths.⁷³

In short, just as Chalabī requested a new book which would explain the ‘strange’ secrets of the universals and particulars of other didactic *maṣnavīs* in Persian, I have sought in this section to make clear some of the ‘universals’ and ‘particulars’ within Rūmī’s own literary production. As we have seen, Rūmī aimed to communicate in ‘particular’ ways which would resonate with Muslims and non-Muslims in the land of Rūm, as well as to appropriate ‘universal,’ translocal and canonical texts in both Arabic and Persian within the greater Islamic literary world. Ultimately, as I will suggest in the following sections and chapters, the success of these communicative strategies was contingent not only upon Rūmī’s own literary production, but also upon the fact that there was *already* a widely intelligible interpretive framework among the peoples of Rūm to some extent. After all, Rūmī could not give the “people of Rūm” meaning in a way “suitable to them,” or allow these peoples to interpret those meanings according to their own religious idiom, if there were not already some basis for a shared episteme between these peoples. Rūmī’s mission, as I will further demonstrate, was to continue to cultivate this episteme and bring it within a particular religious and social framework in Konya. Just as importantly, as I will argue, Rūmī’s adaptation of the widespread figure of the

⁷³ Recently, scholars have begun to look at the ways in which ‘Sūfī’ discourse was not merely ahistorical, but of course was as intimately connected with particular times and places—as is any form of literary or discursive production. Writing against essentializing or orientalizing approaches to the historical study of Sūfism, Alexander Knysh in particular has productively argued that “it seems more appropriate to view any Sūfī-based movement as a product of a creative reinterpretation of Islam and a rearrangement of certain elements of the Sūfī tradition by concrete Muslim leaders. This interpretation, no matter how radical or subtle, is, in turn, determined by a great variety of social, political and personal factors that often remain concealed from the outside observer.” Knysh further suggests that Sūfism “does not exist outside its concrete interpretation and adaptation to the realities of the day by an individual Sūfī leader and his followers.” See Alexander Knysh, “Sufism as an Explanatory Paradigm: The Issue of the Motivations of

gharīb allowed him to claim a particular kind of authority for himself and his followers which would likewise resonate on both a local and translocal stage, even among the many heterogeneous peoples of Rūm.

3. Beyond Arabic and Islam: A Strange Episteme

Whereas the previous section outlined how Rūmī adapted translocal literary forms and even texts, which he reinterpreted in order to engage with his interpretive community in a widely resonant manner, here I will examine how this practice of appropriation and reinterpretation applies to the figure of the gharīb in particular. Thereby, I will demonstrate how Rūmī's father, spiritual guide, and greater community came to interpret a particular ḥadīth about gharīb, which stated that Islam itself began as a stranger, in part as a commentary on their own historical moment. However, I will begin here with an overview of salient understandings of the gharīb in Arabic, which provides a necessary background for understanding how Rūmī's interpretive community both drew from and reconfigured preexisting concepts of the stranger. At the same time, I will also complicate the notion that the figure of the 'gharīb' has an exclusively Arabic or Islamic genesis by texturing this overview with a wide variety of other sources, including other well-known texts in Persian and even in Christian and Jewish theology. Finally, this section will conclude by arguing that the gharīb was ultimately part of an episteme which transcended any single religion or language, and therefore was especially suited to

Šūfī Resistance Movements in Western and Russian Scholarship," *Die Welt des Islams* 42, no. 2 (2002): 139-73.

Rūmī’s purpose of communicating across religious or linguistic borders in his own literary production, as the following section covers.

To begin, Franz Rosenthal has noted in his groundbreaking article “The Stranger in Medieval Islam” that Arabic literature on *gharīb*s “involves a tremendous—and if truth be told, in fact unmanageable—body of information.”⁷⁴ Rosenthal, who has written the only substantial work on the Arabic *gharīb*-as-stranger, navigates this “unmanageable” body of information by limiting his survey to Arabic depictions of the ‘*gharīb*’ as a *person*, despite the fact that the word conveyed other meanings within the literary branches of ‘*ilm*, encompassing religious and scientific knowledge, and *adab* (plur. *ādāb*), which codified certain ethical behaviors.⁷⁵ Within this basic framework, however,

⁷⁴ Franz Rosenthal, “The Stranger in Medieval Islam,” *Arabica* 44, no. 1 (1997): 35.

⁷⁵ In many ways, however, this ‘limitation’ in Rosenthal’s study is what makes his article so groundbreaking—the semantic fields of the *gharīb* in both ‘*ilm* and *adab* literature are both more widely known to contemporary scholarship than the figure of the *gharīb*-as-stranger.

However, for the reader unfamiliar with ‘*ilm* and *adab* literature, a brief introduction to this dimension of the *gharīb* would be productive. The branches of ‘*ilm* and *adab* significantly informed the body of literature an educated person was expected to know, a category to which Rūmī certainly belonged. In fact, ‘*gharīb*’ played a different role in two branches of ‘*ilm* literature. *Gharīb al-Qur’ān* is the science of rare or unusual Qur’ānic terms, while *gharīb al-ḥadīth* is the designation for ḥadīth, or narratives concerning the words and deeds of the prophet Moḥammad, which rely on a single reporter somewhere along the chain of transmission (*esnād*), and whose authenticity is potentially suspect. While these were narrowly technical terms, in *adab* literature, works very loosely classified under the rubric of *al-‘ajā’ib wa-l-gharā’ib* [*wonders and marvels*] encompass what Nasser Rabbat defines as “several interrelated subgenres from among the ones that dealt with natural and supernatural wonders: astronomy, astrology, zoology, mineralogy, geography, cosmology, paradoxology, *mirabilia*, and *miracula*.” Rabbat notes that these subgenres spanned “the scope of cognitive reactions to the extraordinary and unusual,” and goes even further to examine how the cognitive reaction to wonders and marvels extended to phenomenological understandings of Saljūq and post-Saljūq art from the 13th through 15th centuries, which generally witnessed a flourishing of representational art in Rūm. See Nasser Rabbat, “‘Ajīb and Gharīb: Artistic Perception in Medieval Arabic Sources,” *The Medieval History Journal* 9, no. 1 (2006): 106.

Interest in strange wonders and marvels, capable of producing equally wondrous cognitive states, arrived at a watershed moment around Rūmī’s own lifetime, when Zakarīyya’ al-Qazwīnī (d. 1283) wrote in Arabic what Rabbat calls “the first systematic compilation on the subject,” *‘Ajā’ib al-Makhlūqāt wa-Gharā’ib al-Mawjūdāt* [*Wondrous Creatures and Strange Beings*]. Al-Qazwīnī in particular distinguished between the terms ‘ajīb and *gharīb*, noting that ajīb represents phenomena whose cause is beyond the comprehension of humans, whereas the *gharīb* represents rare phenomena that run contrary to normative observation. See Zakariyā ibn Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī, *‘Ajā’ib al-Makhlūqāt wa-Gharā’ib al-Mawjūdāt*, edited by Fārūq Sa’d (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīdah, 1973). For a short overview of al-Qazwīnī’s life, see also S. Maqbul Ahmad, “Al-Qazwīnī, Zakariyā ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd, Abū Yahyā,” in *Complete Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, vol. 11 (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008), 230-233.

Rosenthal covers a remarkable number of prevalent Arabic authors, even beginning with poetic depictions of poverty in pre-Islamic Arabia as they evolved into the *gharīb* of medieval Islam.⁷⁶

Throughout his survey, Rosenthal furnishes succinct translations from diverse authors, such as the famous 9th century poet, ‘Alī b. al-Jahm (“Pity the stranger in a foreign country, what has he done to himself! [...] He enjoyed great prestige when he lived near his domicile, but later, when he was far away, he was downcast.”⁷⁷), to the 10th century intellectual Abū Hayyān al-Tawhīdī (“Wherever he sets foot, the stranger is humbled. His arm is short, his tongue always blunted.”⁷⁸), to the early 14th century theologian Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīya (“Whenever a believer takes up residence in this (worldly) mansion (*dār*), he is a stranger there, and he is in a foreign territory (or exile, *dār al-ghurba*), as the Prophet has said: “Be in this world as if you were a stranger!”⁷⁹). Through this broad survey, Rosenthal draws a few conclusions regarding Arabic discourse on the *gharīb*-as-stranger. He suggests that in general, “reflections on the stranger stress his utter miserableness,” and that “constant and bitter complaining is the hallmark of his existence.”⁸⁰ Rosenthal elaborates upon this, arguing that the stranger in particular is one who lacks prestige, or *‘izz*:

The most pervasive of the negative aspects was clearly a state of “humiliation (*dull/dillah*)” from which the stranger could not escape. Its opposite is *‘izz* which

⁷⁶ Similarly, my intent here is not to provide a comprehensive overview of the ‘*gharīb*’ in Arabic letters, as that would require several monographs unto itself. Rather, I seek to highlight some of the major concepts and patterns in these configurations of the *gharīb*, especially in terms that are relevant to how the stranger was understood by the interpretive community in Konya.

⁷⁷ Rosenthal, “The Stranger in Medieval Islam,” 46.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

might often be rendered by “prestige.” ‘*Izz* tends to vanish whenever home, family, and the friends among whom one has grown up are abandoned and have become nothing but a fond memory.⁸¹

While we will return to discuss the concept of ‘*izz* in Rūmī’s own conceptualization of the *gharīb*, for now it suffices to say that such “humiliation” did not extend to everyone who left home to go abroad. Students and scholars who traveled in search of an education or employment cultivated a degree of ‘*izz* that eluded the more institutionally detached *gharīb*.⁸² Other intellectuals and poets who emigrated over great distances to find patronage likewise were classified as guests (*ḍayf*) and consequently were not considered *gharīb*s in a strict sense, although Rosenthal rightly cautions that it’s difficult to draw clear lines between literary conceptualizations of the *gharīb* and how those conceptualizations actually played out in terms of actual treatment of strangers. Who, then, actually qualified as a *gharīb* in the sense that al-Jahm, al-Tawḥīdī, and al-Jawzīya seem to be depicting?

In fact, a variety of premodern Arab intellectuals and exegetes debated this question in somewhat abstract terms before Rūmī’s time. Rosenthal notes that “within the community of believers and wherever Muslims were in political control, there was, in theory, no such distinct category as a ‘stranger,’” since, with the possible exception of “hostile sectarianism,” Muslims theoretically lived in unified brotherhood with each other.⁸³ Still, even beginning from this simple premise, a considerable degree of ambiguity remains. Al-Jawzīya, for instance, implies in the passage quoted above that a believer could be a “*gharīb*” if one ventured beyond the realm of Islam, but also in a more

⁸¹ Ibid., 42.

⁸² Ibid., 41.

general sense that *all* true believers are already gharībs insofar as they reside in this material world.⁸⁴ While the word ‘gharīb’ does not appear in the Qur’ān, the Ḥadīth, or reports about the Prophet, express similar injunctions. For instance, one ḥadīth found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim* reports that when ‘Abd-ūllah ibn Mas‘ūd inquired who strangers [*ghurabā*] really are, the prophet replied that anyone who turns away from their own people for the sake of Islam is a gharīb. Although this ḥadīth allows for the possibility of strangers within the world of Islam, it generally does so in order to comment on the distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Another more elliptical ḥadīth begins to deconstruct this rigid dichotomy. This ḥadīth, also found in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, poses a direct theoretical challenge to the notion that gharībs cannot exist within the unified body of Islam, as it quotes Moḥammad as declaring enigmatically, “Islam began as a stranger [*gharībān*], and it will return as a stranger [*gharībān*] as it began. Therefore, blessed are the strangers.”⁸⁵ Rosenthal argued that this infamous ḥadīth had the potential to create “one overarching concept” to bring together all the strands of thought associated with the gharīb-stranger: the dejected state of humiliation, the eclipse of prestige associated with home and hearth, and enmity with the world and with non-believers. Yet, at least for Rosenthal, this potential remained “unrealized,”⁸⁶ as it did not engender a singularly rigorous and ultimately universal way to conceptualize the stranger vis-a-vis the greater Islamic *umma*.

⁸³ Ibid., 35-36.

⁸⁴ To make this point, al-Jawzīya draws from a ḥadīth found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, narrated by ‘Abd-ūllah ibn ‘Umar, wherein the Prophet commands ‘Umar to “Be in the world as if you were a stranger [*gharīb*] or a wayfarer [*‘ābir al-sabīl*].”

⁸⁵ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj ibn Qushayrī, *Al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: 1849), 104.

⁸⁶ Rosenthal, “The Stranger in Medieval Islam,” 59.

There are many reasons for this. First, while the body of commentary on this ḥadīth does not doubt its authenticity, we know nothing about the exact historical circumstances in which it arose. In part, the dearth of context has caused a proliferation of occasionally conflicting interpretations to develop over time, especially regarding the troubling notion that Muslims would one day become “gharīb,” an exiled or outcast minority, possibly at the end of time. So much ink was spilled in an attempt to provide a satisfactory answer to this problem that the 10th century al-Ājurrī even wrote the *Book of the Strangers* [*Kitāb al-ghurabā*’], an entire work loosely devoted to the interpretation of this mysterious ḥadīth.

However, for Rūmī’s family and followers, one of the more important interpretations of this ḥadīth belongs to the enormously influential Persian theologian Moḥammad al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111), who provided an exegesis in his epochal work in Arabic, *Revival of the Religious Sciences* [*Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, c.1106].⁸⁷ Primarily for al-Ghazzālī, the gharīb was a true Muslim who was sent to restore Islam in an age of widespread heresy.⁸⁸ Al-Ghazzālī therefore explains:

All knowledge which the forefathers favored has been obliterated, and the majority of what people are devoted to is innovation [*mubtadi’*]⁸⁹ and novelty. The Messenger of God was correct when he said: “Islam began as a gharīb and will return as a gharīb. Blessed, therefore, are the gharīb.” And who are the strangers [*ghurabā’*]? He said, “Those who put in order what the people distorted of my sunna, and those who revitalize what the people killed of my sunna.” And

⁸⁷ Like Rūmī, al-Ghazzālī was born in the region of Khorāsān and was patronized for a time by the Saljūqs, although in Baghdad.

⁸⁸ Similarly, we ought to note that this was largely al-Ghazzālī’s intention in writing the *Revival of the Religious Sciences*.

⁸⁹ Mubtadi’, which I have translated as ‘innovation’ also could be rendered generally as ‘heretic.’ As we will see, the ‘gharīb’ was later contrasted specifically against the ‘mubtadi’ in Rūmī’s own interpretive community.

in another report: “They are those who cling to what you have today.” And in another ḥadīth: “The strangers [*ghurabā*] are a small, upright people among a greater people, who are hated more among the people than are loved.”⁹⁰

In some ways, al-Ghazzālī’s interpretation is consistent with other understandings of the *gharīb*, such as the interpretation posited by al-Tawḥīdī, who, as Rosenthal notes, considered the *gharīb* to be the true Muslim who serves “as the universal model for all human beings.”⁹¹ However, al-Ghazzālī’s interpretation that true *gharīb*s perform a restorative function by purging science and theology of false innovations, as well as his suggestion that *gharīb*s belong to a righteous minority of otherwise educated people, also implies that he viewed true ‘*gharīb*s’ not only as true Muslims, but as a model in particular for religious scholars. As Rosenthal has observed, a similar idea enjoyed currency with other scholars at this time, especially the 11th century theologian Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, who posited that the *ghurabā*’ (pl. of *gharīb*) are those religious scholars who restore and preserve the *sunna*.⁹² For al-Ghazzālī, the *gharīb* represented the ‘good Muslim,’ but especially evoked an understanding of true believers as both marginalized *and* capable of revitalizing the *sunna*.

Especially in al-Ghazzālī’s case, this understanding of the *gharīb* was not merely rhetorical: not only was he orphaned as a child, but he also wrote these lines when he lived in exile and poverty, having vowed no longer to serve any government or take money from any ruler.⁹³ His own status as a ‘*gharīb*’ not only reflected a particular *social* condition as described by al-Jahm and al-Tawḥīdī, but it also mirrored his exegesis of the

⁹⁰ Moḥammad al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, edited by ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn al-Ḥusayn ‘Irāqī, vol. 1 (Cairo: Lajnat Nashr al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya, 1937-38), 64.

⁹¹ Rosenthal, “The Stranger in Medieval Islam,” 58.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 61.

religious function of gharībs as well, since he ultimately sought to restore the ‘religious sciences’ from the false innovations of heretics and philosophers. In that sense, al-Ghazzālī really did bring together the major social and theological valences of the gharīb, if not in his writings, then within his own historical person. Quite literally, despite being impoverished and alone, he still intended to restore what he viewed as the original form of Islam.

Most significantly for the present study, not only was al-Ghazzālī’s exegesis on gharībs known to Rūmī’s father, Bahā’ al-Dīn, but there is evidence to suggest that Bahā’ al-Dīn also loosely considered himself to be a gharīb in a similar theological and social sense.⁹⁴ Unlike al-Ghazzālī, who left his prestigious position in Baghdad to go into exile during a period of intensive epistemological questioning, Bahā’ al-Dīn was marginalized in a different way, as he was largely unknown in the greater region of Khorāsān. He likely resided in Vakhsh, which is south of present-day Tajikistan,⁹⁵ where he preached five days a week and taught exegesis of the Qur’ān. Despite this, as Fritz Meier has pointed out, he does not seem to have wielded much influence beyond his immediate

⁹³ See J. Van Ess, “Quelque remarques sur le Munqid min ad-dalāl,” in *Ghazālī: La Raison et Le Miracle: Table Ronde Unesco, 9-10 Décembre 1985* (Paris: Editions Maisonneuve et Larose, 1987), 57-68.

⁹⁴ A. J. Arberry has noted that while al-Ghazzālī had an important impact on Bahā’ al-Dīn’s thinking, it was to “al-Ghazzālī’s brother Ahmad (died 1123), author in Persian of a subtle metaphysical essay on Divine Love, that Bahā’ al-Dīn traced his spiritual descent.” See A. J. Arberry, trans., *Discourses of Rumi* (Richard, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1993) 1. In contradistinction, Schimmel has argued that “Baha, on the basis of his own diaries as contained in the *Ma’arif*, was not a “Sufi” in the traditional sense of the word and the attempt to see him in the spiritual chain that leads back to Ahmad Ghazzali (d. 1126) is futile.” See Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalaloddin Rumi* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), xv. However, as both Forūzānfar and Lewis have posited, not only was Rūmī familiar with Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī’s *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, but he even appropriated sections of al-Ghazzālī’s masterpiece to compose the *Masnavī*. See Lewis, *Rumi*, 289-291. For the seminal work on Bahā’ al-Dīn, see Friedrich Max Meier, *Bahā’-e Valad: Grundzüge Seines Lebens Und Seiner Mystik* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989).

⁹⁵ While scholars place Bahā’ al-Dīn in Vakhsh until 1211, when Rūmī was about five years old, Aflākī’s account, which was directed towards an audience who certainly would have known about the prestige of Balkh but perhaps not of the lesser-important Vakhsh, situates Bahā’ al-Dīn more generally in the region of Balkh and Khorāsān at the time of his exodus.

social circle. In addition, his body of teachings, which were collected into a manuscript known as the *Ma'āref*, does not seem to have been regarded as important by anyone except for Rūmī and his companions in Konya.

One of the major accounts of Rūmī's life, Aflākī's *The Feats of the Knowers of God* [*Manāqeb al-'ārefīn*], takes advantage of Bahā' al-Dīn's marginal status in order to juxtapose 'intellect' as a *gharīb* against the 'carnal self' of the sovereign of Khorāsān, the Khwārazmshāh.⁹⁶ This occurs in one of the first accounts on Rūmī's family, in the year 1211, when Bahā' al-Dīn condemned the Khwārazmshāh and a preeminent local exegete as "innovators [*mobtade'*]" in a sermon.⁹⁷ He particularly stressed that corruption of the *sharī'a* resulted in part from following these false "sages and the philosophers [*hokamā'*]"

⁹⁶ Generally speaking, there are three main sources which chronicle Rūmī's life and the beginning of what would become the Mowlavī order. The earliest source, the *Valad-nāma*, was written by Rūmī's son, Solṭān Valad, who organized Rūmī's followers after the death of his father. Not surprisingly, Solṭān Valad was invested in legitimizing the spiritual authority of the fledgling Mowlavī order through the miraculous life of his father. The next source, Farīdūn ibn Aḥmad Sepahsālār's *Resāla-ye Sepahsālār*, was purportedly written by a little-known figure who apparently knew Rūmī firsthand for nearly 40 years. Franklin Lewis notes that Sepahsālār was buried next to Solṭān Valad, although almost no biographical information is known about him, however. While major scholars on Rūmī such as Forūzānfar and Gölpınarlı do not doubt the authenticity of Sepahsālār, a more recent argument by Bahrām Behīzād suggests that the *Resāla-ye Sepahsālār* was actually a 16th century recension of the most popular premodern account of Rūmī's life: Aflākī's *Manāqeb al-'ārefīn* (See Bahrām Behīzād, *Resāla-ye Manḥūl-e Sepahsālār: Noskha-ye Gomshoda-ye Maṣnavī* (Tehran: Mo'assasa-ye Khadamāt-e Farhangī-ye Rasā, 1997). In contrast, there is no controversy surrounding the authenticity and dating of Aflākī's work, which he began composing at the khāneqāh in Konya in 1318. If the author of Sepahsālār is to be believed, this is essentially the same time the *Resāla-ye Sepahsālār* was finished, although neither work mentions the other.

Despite this, Sepahsālār's account is often credited as being the most 'reliable,' in that it is less miraculous than Aflākī's account, and consequently more 'historical.' Franklin Lewis, who wrote the most detailed study of Rūmī in English, makes this argument largely in terms of historicity, noting: "Sepahsālār's life of Rūmī presents us with a far more sober history than the contemporaneous account of Aflākī, who constantly lends his credence to incredible supernatural events associated with Rūmī and Shams. As such, we may place a greater degree of faith in Sepahsālār, despite the uncertainty about the years of his companionship with Rūmī and the date of composition of his "Treatise," and assume him, for the purpose of reconstructing the events of Rūmī's life, to be generally more reliable than Aflākī." See Lewis, *Rumi*, 249. My concern here is somewhat different, however, as I do not seek to sift 'history' from 'hagiography,' but rather to examine how and why Rūmī's family and earliest followers came to understand themselves as 'gharībs,' as well as how they used this conception in order to articulate their own authority to a wide variety of peoples. In that sense, Aflākī's contemporaneous account is more valuable for my purposes, as it reveals contemporary attitudes on *gharībs* in the founding stories which established and constructed Rūmī's legitimacy. I will discuss Solṭān Valad's understanding of the *gharīb* in the following chapter, which helps to bridge Persian and Turkish literature in Anatolia during this period.

⁹⁷ Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-'ārefīn*, vol. 1, 11.

va falāsefa]⁹⁸,” whom al-Ghazzālī also rebuked. But whereas al-Ghazzālī did not explicitly call out these ‘innovators’ by name in his own discussion on the *gharīb*, Bahā’ al-Dīn directly blames the Khvārazmshāh for letting his “carnal self [*nafs*]” reign over spiritual matters⁹⁹:

Darkness, temptation, fantasy, depraved passions, and deviation appeared because intellect¹⁰⁰ is a *gharīb*, while the [bodily] self is in its own country and that country is one of devils...¹⁰¹

Noticeably, the language of this sermon intersects both with al-Ghazzālī’s exegesis and the overall framework of the *Revival of the Religious Sciences*: like al-Ghazzālī, Bahā’ al-Dīn’ juxtaposes the ‘*gharīb*’ against a variety of innovators, those false sages and philosophers, who have corrupted the original religion of the Prophet. Furthermore, Bahā’ al-Dīn’s *gharīb* is likewise depicted as out-of-place, hated more among the people than loved, since being a true ‘revitalizer’ of Islam is akin to living friendless and unknown in a foreign country. Just as Rūmī appropriated translocal discourses and literary forms to address the heterogeneous peoples in Konya, here Bahā’ al-Dīn also reframed a broadly shared understanding of the *gharīb* to address to his own immediate circumstances and community.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 12.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Aql might also be translated as “mind,” “sense,” or “reason,” which Bahā’ al-Dīn then contrasts against the “self” [*nafs*], the person, of the Khvārazmshāh.

¹⁰¹ The sermon which Aflākī quotes here is actually taken from Bahā’ al-Dīn’s *Ma’āref*, which Rūmī read and reread to such an extent that Shams al-Dīn Tabrīzī once instructed him to put aside so it would not obstruct Rūmī’s spiritual development. Ibid., 12.

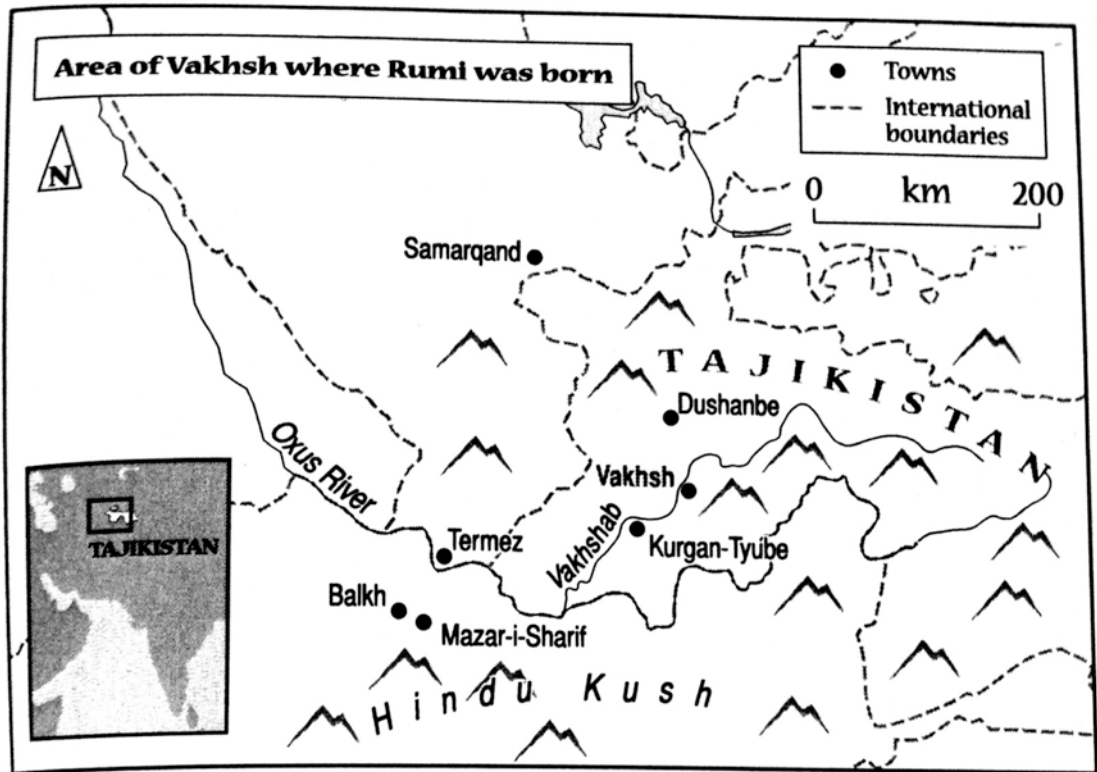


Fig. 3: Rūmī's birthplace¹⁰²

Equally significantly, the *The Feats of the Knowers of God* suggests that Rūmī's followers came to associate this particular sermon, in which the intellect is a gharīb in a country of devils, with Bahā' al-Dīn's reason for leaving his own native land and venturing into the west. Before departing, Bahā' al-Dīn warned that God would punish those who ignored his warnings,¹⁰³ and he continued to make similar prophetic warnings

¹⁰² Lewis, *Rumi*, 647.

¹⁰³ This sermon sets the tone for subsequent warnings made by Bahā' al-Dīn against those who treat him and his followers unkindly. Bahā' al-Dīn reportedly proclaimed upon leaving Khorāsān: "At present, I will leave, but may it be known that immediately after me will arrive the multitudinous army of the Tātārs, who are the army of God and are scattered locusts, whose attributes are these: "I created them in my wrath and my anger." And they will seize the region of Khorāsān, and they will make the people of Balkh drink the bitter poison of death. And they will disrupt [*tort va mort*] the world and they will remove the presence of the king from the kingdom by a hundred thousand afflictions and sorrows. And at last, you will perish in the hand of the Sultan of Rūm" (Ibid., 15.). In fact, the incoming Mongol forces may have had little to do with Bahā' al-Dīn's decision to migrate. Most probably, if Bahā' al-Dīn could not cultivate the following and patronage he needed in Khorāsān, he likely resettled his family for economic reasons. Whatever their reason for initially moving west, the gambit paid off. After leaving Damascus, Bahā' al-Dīn continued onward to Malatya and Akshahr in his search for patronage while his renown gradually spread.

on his slow and arduous journey from Balkh to Baghdad, then onward to Mecca and Damascus. In those cities where proper due was not paid to Bahā' al-Dīn or where iniquity was present, Aflākī notes that the Mongols swept into the region immediately after Rūmī's family vacated the area.¹⁰⁴ However, most importantly for Aflākī, the Mongol armies served a didactic purpose: throughout the westward migration of Rūmī's family in *The Feats of the Knowers of God*, the Mongols execute God's judgment against those who have mistreated the *true* gharībs, who are members of Rūmī's own coterie. In fact, some years later, Rūmī similarly declares that the Mongols would destroy the city of Aleppo for abusing one of his companions, a 'gharīb,' because the city was unkind towards strangers.¹⁰⁵

Nor were Bahā' al-Dīn and his followers the only ones who became associated with gharībs. In the city of Konya, various people considered Rūmī to be a gharīb in a similar sense. In another report, the famous Ṣūfī poet Fakhr al-Dīn Ebrāhīm 'Erāqī (d. 1289) attended the madrasa in Konya to participate in samā'¹⁰⁶, where entered into an

Eventually, the Saljūq Sultan 'Alā al-Dīn Kay Qobād invited Rūmī's father to preach and organize a following in Konya.

¹⁰⁴ The far-flung military campaigns of the Mongols created upheaval and refugees across wide swaths of the 13th century world, spanning Northern China, Northern India, the Crimea, the Near East, Southern Europe, and Rūm. In Aflākī's depiction of these accounts, the widespread massacres in the wake of Chengīz Khan are incredibly brutal, sparing neither pregnant women nor animals. (Ibid., 20.) Aflākī emphasizes the "scoreless captives and slaves" who were carried off during this period, as well as the wholesale slaughter of Qur'ān memorizers and torching of over twelve thousand mosques. In fact, while writing nearly a century later, Aflākī expressed dismay that he was unsure how to represent the deaths of so many "common people" in writing. However, it should be noted that Bahā' al-Dīn departed from Khorāsān a full decade before the Mongols took Balkh. Aflākī's account, which was written almost a century later, is reflective of the widespread and lasting shock at the scale of these invasions, not of historically accurate events, as Lewis notes. (Ibid., 21.)

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 427. Elsewhere, Rūmī makes it clear that caring for strangers [*gharīb navāzī*] is inherent to doing the work of men of religion [*kār-e mardān-e dīn*]. Ibid., 167.

¹⁰⁶ Franklin Lewis describes this practice in this way: "The samā' ceremony, of which not all Ṣūfīs and certainly not all jurisconsults approved, consisted in listening to music or even dancing, once again a congregational activity held usually in the lodge. Since music and dancing were associated with royal courts, slave girls, wine drinking and debauchery, Islamic law generally did not encourage it, though it did not necessarily forbid it outright, as has often been claimed. [...] The Ṣūfī undertakes samā', a kind of instrumental and motive orison, only after years of spiritual poverty, fasting and retreats, when he has

ecstatic state in the presence of Rūmī. The experience was reportedly so transformative that even after Rūmī's death, 'Erāqī continued to praise Rūmī's greatness, often sighing and declaring, "No one understood Mowlānā [Rūmī] as he ought to be [understood]. He came into this world a gharīb and departed from it a gharīb."¹⁰⁷ Other members of Rūmī's coterie even more explicitly equated him with Muslim's ḥadīth. For instance, Rūmī's own spiritual guide, Shams al-Dīn Tabrīzī, told Rūmī's son:

The secret of [Rūmī] is veiled as is the secret of Islam. Like Islam, he has come as a gharīb. See how his secret shall be as '*Islam began as a gharīb and will return as a gharīb. How blessed are the strangers!*'¹⁰⁸

Similar to the ḥadīth itself, these comments appear somewhat mysteriously, and no immediate explication is given within Aflākī's text. Arguably, these statements were uttered within milieu where it was understood, in different degrees, what constitutes a gharīb's nature, which was associated with the origins of Islam. Yet we also ought to consider the context in which these reports were written: Aflākī wrote the *Feats of the Knowers of God* both to portray Rūmī's family and followers as blessed with divine authority. By recording Rūmī's words and deeds, Aflākī ultimately posited a behavioral model for subsequent followers. Within this context, both Bahā' al-Dīn and Rūmī ought to be *emulated* by others, and this act of emulation ultimately had the potential to form a new religious community, mirroring the beginnings of Islam itself.

attained a certain state of mystic development. In samā', this state intensifies, for the goal is a closer approach to God." Lewis, *Rumi*, 28. Interestingly, on one occasion in which Rūmī was compelled to defend the samā, he played what he called a "gharīb's rebec [*rabāb*]," which described the pitiful state of gharībs, and in this way deeply affected those who stood against him. See Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-'ārefīn*, vol. 1, 167.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 400.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 308-309. The ḥadīth which Shams al-Dīn quotes here is, of course, Arabic.

In fact, the notion that *gharībs* are worthy of emulation extends far beyond literature in Arabic or the milieu in Konya. For instance, ‘Aṭṭār’s prose biography of different saints and Ṣūfīs, *Memorial of the Saints* [*Taẓkerat al-awlīyā*], exhibits a few key instances where significant Islamic figures are identified as ‘gharībs.’ The *Memorial* is especially important, not only because Rūmī placed such a high premium on ‘Aṭṭār, but also because ‘Aṭṭār states in the introduction that he desired to make the ‘saints’ accessible to those who did not speak Arabic. One notable example of this comes from the life of Rābe‘a (d. 801),¹⁰⁹ who was orphaned at a young age and sold into slavery. Terrified by her strange surroundings, Rābe‘a cried out to God: “I am a gharīb, motherless and fatherless, a captive, and [my] hand [is] broken.”¹¹⁰ Immediately, God responded to this gharīb-saint, telling her that he would elevate her position beyond even the angels in heaven. In this case, the gharīb is literally enslaved in a foreign land, with no friend but God, but still possesses a veiled authority and divine favor. By emulating the lives of the saints, ‘Aṭṭār notes, one can become freed from one’s own attachments to the world—just as Rābe‘a’s enslavement precluded her transformation as a true gharīb, the lover of God.

Other major works of Ṣūfīsm make it abundantly clear that the gharīb should be emulated in all respects. For instance, the oldest surviving manual of Ṣūfīsm in Persian, the late 11th century *Unveiling the Hidden* [*Kashf al-Mahjūb*], cites al-Jonayd’s (d. 910) eight defining qualities any Ṣūfī must cultivate. As noted in the introduction, the seventh quality is exemplified by John the Baptist, who appears as a prophet in both the Qur’ān and New Testament, because his “exile” [*ghorbat*] made him “a gharīb in his own

¹⁰⁹ A popular Ṣūfī figure who famously declared that she wished to burn down heaven and extinguish hell so only the love of God may remain in the hearts of men.

homeland [*vaṭan*] and a stranger [*bīgāna*, *lit. unknown*] to his own people.”¹¹¹ Similarly, *Unveiling the Hidden* also cites Abū Ḥamza Khorāsānī (d. 903), who stated that the *gharīb* is he whose homeland [*vaṭan*] is neither in this world nor in the life to come, as the stranger is cut off from existence [*kawn*] altogether.¹¹² In both of these cases, the ‘*gharīb*’ serves as a model for the behavior of others: one must become ‘estranged’ like the wild prophet John in order to practice true Islam, cut off from one’s ‘homeland’ and even this metaphysical plane. However, this does not mean that the *gharīb* does not actively engage with this world or society, even though he or she stands apart from it. Like the prophet John, who called on others to renounce their own ties to the world, these examples suggest that the true *gharīb* helps to foster other strangers.

For instance, in another report from Aflākī’s account, a dervish by the name of Shams al-Dīn-e ‘Aṭṭār was listening to a sermon by Rūmī about Kheẓr when he noticed a ‘*gharīb*’ sitting in the corner. This strange person was engaged in a conversation with himself, confirming audibly that everything Rūmī said was true. Suddenly, it dawned on Shams al-Dīn that the stranger was Kheẓr himself. When he approached the saint to beg for his help, Kheẓr replied that Shams al-Dīn should instead seek the assistance of Rūmī, who was the source of Kheẓr’s own help and instruction. With that, the ‘*gharīb*’ saint suddenly vanished.¹¹³ While Kheẓr’s appearance as a *gharīb* in this report serves to further establish Rūmī’s religious authority, it also reinforces the notion that major Islamic figures can appear as strangers to other Muslims. Arguably, the appearance of

¹¹⁰ Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār, *Tazkerat al-awliyā* (Bombay: Maṭba‘-ye Moḥammadī, 1895) 40.

¹¹¹ ‘Alī ebn ‘Osmān Hojvīrī, *Kashf Al-Mahjūb*, ed. Valentin Alekseyevich Zhukovskii and Qāsem Anṣārī (Tehran: Ketābkhāna-ye Ṭahūrī, 1979), 45.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 184.

¹¹³ See Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-‘ārefīn*, vol. 1, 344.

gharībs in either Rūmī's society or in his literary production often indicates the presence of someone with the true authority of Islam.



Fig. 4: Kheẓr the 'green' gharīb attends a sermon by Rūmī. From an abridged translation of Aflākī into Turkish, c. 1590. The Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.466, fol. 15r.

In this sense, the true gharīb ultimately reverses our expectations about who strangers really are, as gharībs are not merely earthly wanderers, but rather are the intimate friends of God. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, Rūmī’s family and companions came to understand the ‘true’ gharīb as someone who is out-of-place and sometimes unrecognized, yet who still bears the original authority of Islam. Therefore, unlike the general conclusion Rosenthal draws about the gharīb-stranger in Arabic letters, Rūmī and his companions reinterpreted the figure of the gharīb as secretly and unexpectedly possessing great prestige and divine favor. As a result, the figure of the gharīb did not represent an abstract, ahistorical body of Arabic commentary on a particular ḥadīth, but rather reflected how a fledgling religious community understood their *own* founders as gharībs worthy of emulation.

To this end, Rūmī also interpreted Muslim’s ḥadīth in conversation with Mo‘īn al-Dīn, the chief administrator appointed by the Mongols in Rūm¹¹⁴, in a manner which broadly reflected his own establishment in Konya. For Rūmī, the ‘true’ gharīb is someone who has forsaken all attachments to the world, and therefore is a ‘stranger’ wherever they go—much like Rūmī’s own family and initiated followers. He therefore poses the question:

¹¹⁴ Rūmī appears to have held an complex relationship with Mo‘īn-al-Dīn. Throughout Aflākī’s *Manāqeb al-‘ārefīn*, which was written after Mo‘īn-al-Dīn’s eventual execution, Rūmī interacts directly with his patron in a variety of settings, many of which take place during various samā’s hosted at Mo‘īn-al-Dīn’s house. Such narratives usually serve Aflākī’s purpose of illustrating the absolute erudition of Rūmī in nearly every matter, stressing Mo‘īn-al-Dīn as a respectful, if occasionally questioning (yet ultimately submissive and devoted), disciple of Rūmī. Ebn Bībī, the court historian of the Saljūqs, paints a different portrait of Mo‘īn-al-Dīn as an inexhaustibly ambitious figure. Despite the fact that Aflākī is careful to color Rūmī’s patron in a favorable light, the ruthlessly pragmatic Mo‘īn-al-Dīn helped orchestrate the death of the Saljūq Sultan before nominally installing the latter’s son on the throne and ruling behind the scenes in the Ilkhanate’s stead.

A westerner [*maghrebī*] is established in the west [*maghreb*] and an easterner [*mashreqī*] comes to the west. The gharīb is the westerner, but what gharīb is he who came from the east?¹¹⁵

While the easterner may have left the ‘east,’ Rūmī suggests that the entire world is but one house, and going from one room to another does not really engender estrangement from hearth and home. In contradistinction, Rūmī asserts that the westerner has quit his house altogether, giving up his wealth and substance, because he does not belong to this material realm. For this reason, the ‘westerner’ is the true gharīb: the one who has quit his worldly attachments. Rūmī concludes this explanation by citing the ḥadīth, “Islam began as a gharīb,” and then adapting the ḥadīth in Arabic, noting that the “Prophet did not say that *the easterner began as a gharīb*.¹¹⁶”

Travel, immigration, and dispersion was so commonplace at this period in time that Rūmī may have felt the need to distinguish between the ‘social’ and ‘theological’ differences in being a gharīb.¹¹⁷ To a limited extent, the concepts of ‘easterner’ and ‘westerner’ can be mapped onto the entrance of many peoples into Rūm. To give one example, in a rather literal reading of this exegesis, the Mongol invasions provide a prime case of ‘easterners’ displacing ‘westerners:’ as the 13th century historian Jovaynī reports,

¹¹⁵ Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Fīthe Mā Fīh*, edited by Ḥosayn Ḥaydarkhānī (Tehran: Sanā’ī, 1996) 278-79.

¹¹⁶ In this case, Rūmī plays with the expectation that true gharībs are those who have quit their native lands and gone to live among foreign ‘westerners.’ However, as I suggested, the true nature of the gharīb is not always externally visible, but rather is inwardly hidden. In a similar way, Rūmī draws from the Arabic root *gh-r-b* to illustrate how the gharīb is a westerner [*maghrebī*] who truly lives in the west [*maghreb*], as opposed to the easterner [*mashreqī*] who merely arrives to dislodge gharībs from their temporary place of dwelling. In this strictly literal case (i.e., in this case of letters) Rūmī juxtaposes the inner root of ‘gharīb,’ located, again literally, *inside* the West, against the established assumption that the easterner would seem to be the stranger. *Ibid.*, 279.

¹¹⁷ However, it is important to note that these two valences of the ‘stranger’ were not always mutually exclusive. For instance, from al-Ghazzālī’s perspective, leaving his prestigious position in Baghdad and living in relative poverty came as a direct result of his theological and epistemic questioning, not the other way around. ‘True’ gharībs might travel because they have given up their attachment to the

the Mongols initially considered the territories they conquered west of the Oxus River as the *belād-e gharbī*, or ‘western lands,’¹¹⁸ making them ‘easterners’ by their own definition. Rūmī’s disciples additionally discussed the seizure of property by Mongols near Konya, which displaced ‘westerners’ from their houses and homes.¹¹⁹ In contradistinction, Rūmī’s rather common name, meaning ‘from Rome,’ or perhaps more accurately, ‘from the lands of Rūm,’ implies that unlike the Mongols, his own beginning was a ‘western’ one.¹²⁰ Furthermore, as we will see in the following section, one of Rūmī’s primary aims was to help his followers quit their ties to this world, whatever their religion. In this sense, Rūmī’s additional modification of the ḥadīth, which allows him to state that Islam did *not* begin as an easterner, broadly mirrors the establishment of his family in Konya, where their teachings found patronage, prestige, and most importantly, a diverse and even multi-religious body of followers.¹²¹

world, but ultimately it’s the act of forsaking worldly attachments itself, and not travel or poverty which is only a signifier of that act, which makes one a gharīb in Rūmī’s understanding.

¹¹⁸ See Jovaynī, *The Ta’rīkh-I-Jahān-Gushā of ‘Alā’u ‘d-Dīn ‘Atā Malik-I-Jurwaynī*, edited by Muḥammad Qazwīnī, vol. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill; Luzac & co., 1912), 246. Yildiz has observed that these “western territories potentially represented the entire span of the western land mass up to the ocean—the natural termination point for conquest,” making the Mongols ‘easterners,’ by their own definition, in the western lands of Rūm. Sara Nur Yildiz, “Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Seljuk Anatolia,” 4-5.

¹¹⁹ However, before invading the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm, the Mongols were likewise perceived to resemble gharīb, if only outwardly: “first they were in the wilderness,” another discourse from the *Fīthe Mā Fīh* states, “far from people, destitute and poor, naked and needy.” (Rūmī, *Fīthe Mā Fīh*, 293). Yet after the Khvārazmshāh ordered the execution of Mongol traders, an act which spurred the initial military campaigns of the Mongols westward, the Mongols “became victorious and seized the world,” ending their campaign in a position of power far different than that of the naked and needy outcast. Rūmī uses this simple example to illustrate how the Mongols were successful in their campaigns when they were weak because God supported them, but after they became victorious and haughty, Rūmī warned that God would bring them low again (Ibid., 293). In other words, the Mongols were not ‘true’ gharīb, even when they were in the wilderness, because they had not forsaken their attachments to this world.

¹²⁰ As Julie Meisami notes, Rūmī was “first of all” an exile from Khorāsān, the eastern lands where his father considered his message to be a ‘gharīb’ in a country ruled by devils. See Lewis, *Rumi*, xiii. He seems to have acquired the name ‘Rūmī’ sometime after his death, when his subsequent followers established his teachings and their own authority in Konya and beyond.

¹²¹ Of course, while ought to be careful not to weight our interpretation of a centuries-old discourse too heavily in the context of Rūm, it would be equally reductive to understand the concept of the ‘gharīb,’ ‘easterners,’ and ‘westerners’ through an ahistorical frame, as though Rūmī, the Parvāna, and the other companions in the room simply resided in a discursive bubble, out-of-time. After all, the concept of ‘true’ gharīb with hidden prestige is predicated on the expectation that the majority of wanderers,

This brings us to the most important point in charting a conceptual map of Rūmī's gharīb: it ought to be apparent that notions of social or worldly 'estrangement,' as well as the concept of the stranger as a hidden authority in disguise, are not exclusively 'Islamic' ideas, even though the genealogy I have traced here happens to focus on Islamic and Ṣūfī interpretations. In order to truly appreciate the widespread scope of the 'stranger' in premodern literature, here we ought to take one very large step backwards—both from Islam, as well as from Rūmī's immediate family and followers. In fact, the trope of the stranger as possessing hidden prestige is so ubiquitous that to confine it to a single chain of transmission, or even religious tradition, would be a largely reductive act. For instance, authoritative figures disguised as beggars, wanderers, or strangers are exceedingly common in premodern narratives from around the world: King Odysseus was disguised as a beggar-stranger to enter Ithaca in the *Odyssey*; King Gylfi changed his name to Gangleri, or 'wanderer,' and concealed his identity in the 13th century *Prose Edda*; the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd donned the clothes of a merchant to observe the inner-workings of his realm in the *Thousand and One Nights*; and the list goes on. Like the gharīb in Ṣūfī thought, this commonplace trope of the stranger similarly anticipates a moment of future revelation, wherein the true identity and authority of the stranger will be unveiled before detractors and supporters alike.

Muslims obviously were not the only ones who conceptualized the foundational figures of their religion as 'strangers' with divine favor in Rūm, either. John Chrysostom (d. 407), Archbishop of Constantinople, stressed that Christ took a plain and ordinary

strangers, and immigrants are exactly what they seem to be. Rūmī's example of 'easterners' and 'westerners' reverses this expectation, relying on the audience's experience with 'actual' strangers, in whatever context, in order to build upon a particular understanding of the gharīb as someone extraordinary.

“disguise” (σχήμα) so that harlots and common people would speak with him openly.¹²²

In this sense, Jesus was the ultimate ‘stranger,’ since he not only was a divine figure cloaked in human garb, but also because “foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Matt. 8:20, NRSV), a point which Rūmī even stressed in his own sermons.¹²³ Similarly, John the Baptist received the word of God in the desert, clothed in camel’s hair (Matt. 11:18; Luke 7:33), subsisting only on locust and wild honey (Matt. 3:4; Mark 1:6), and abstaining from the drink of wine (Luke 1:8-17). It’s not surprising that the figure of John, who is a prophet in the Qur’ān, would appeal to thinkers such as al-Jonayd, who used his own conceptual vocabulary to define John as the quintessential gharīb. Especially in this latter case, not only is Christian and Islamic thought inexorably intertwined, but the example of John evokes the marginalization of religious prophets and communities in both Christianity and Islam.¹²⁴

There are other connections between Christ and the gharīb in Rūm as well. For instance, during Rūmī’s own lifetime, a hymn ascribed to the historian George

¹²² J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca*, vol. 59 (Paris: Lutetiae Parisiorum, 1857-1894), 89.

¹²³ Similar examples are abundant. For instance, elsewhere in the New Testament, such as in Philippians 3:20, the notion is made even more explicit that the citizenship (πολίτευμα) of all Christians is in heaven, and therefore all Christians are strangers in this world. Similarly, the famous address to God at the beginning of Augustine’s *Confessions*—*inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te, ‘our heart is restless until it rests in You’*—likewise speaks to the Christian understanding that the world is a distraction from our true home.

However, it ought to be noted that one’s status as a ‘stranger’ is relative: as Jesus proclaims in the Gospel of John 10:5 his flock would not follow a stranger, for they knew not the voice of strangers [ἄλλοτριῶν]. The true Christian may be a ‘stranger’ to the world, but not a stranger to other Christians, as there is “no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female” in Christ (Gal. 3:28, New Revised Standard Version). At the same time, Jesus makes it abundantly clear that his followers were to consider their treatment of the stranger [ξένος] as equivalent to their treatment of him: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matt. 25:35, NRSV).

¹²⁴ From the perspective of Rūmī’s followers, while Jesus pronounces that “no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown” (Luke 4:24, NRSV), he may just as well have been speaking about Bahā’ al-Dīn in Khorāsān, where intellect was a gharīb in a country of devils.

Akropolites in Constantinople describes the authority of a stranger whose true nature was unseen by mortal men.¹²⁵ The hymn, which is sung from the perspective of Joseph of Arimathea during the Matins of Good Friday in the Greek Orthodox Church, urgently repeats over and over again, “*dos moi touton ton xenon*,” or “give me this stranger.” Of course, the ‘stranger’ here refers to the recently crucified body of Jesus Christ, who was a ‘*xenos*’ in this world, as are all Christians. Tellingly, when this moving hymn was translated into Arabic in the following centuries, *xenon* was rendered as *gharīb*, a figure already familiar to a wide variety of peoples.¹²⁶ Whether we understand Christ as a ‘*xenos*’ or as a ‘*gharīb*,’ he serves as the model par excellence for all Christians to emulate, the ‘stranger’ whose followers are hated by the world.

Jewish communities and intellectuals also held similar literary and extra-literary understandings of the stranger during this period. The figure of the stranger with divine favor is highly prominent in the Torah, as the Hebrews are frequently represented as strangers in a strange land, despite being the chosen people of God.¹²⁷ Equally important is the Jewish concept of *galut*, which, as Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson notes, “expresses the Jewish conception of the condition and feelings of a nation uprooted from its homeland

¹²⁵ Giorgio La Piana notes in his *Le rappresentazioni sacre della letteratura bizantina* (Grottaferrata: Tipographia Italo-Orientale “S. Nilo,” 1912), 191, that a source of inspiration for the poem was a Homily on the Great Saturday, which is attributed to Saint Epiphanius (see J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. XLIII, col. 455-8). Generally, medieval and post-medieval manuscripts attribute this hymn to Akropolites, who wrote one of the most important sources of Byzantine history during this period. For instance, MS Athens 884 and MS Athos Vatopaidi 1491 attribute it to “Lord Georgios Akropolites the most wise and Grand Logothete”), MS Sinai 1230, f. 236v, attributes it to “Akropolites.” See Gregorios Th. Stathis, “An Analysis of the Sticheron Tòv ἥλιον κρύψαντα by Germanos, Bishop of New Patras (The Old ‘Synoptic’ and the New ‘Analytical’ Method of Byzantine Notation),” in *Studies in Eastern Chant IV*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladamir’s Press, 1979), 177-227.

¹²⁶ The contemporary Lebanese novelist Elias Khoury, whose family comes from a Greek Orthodox background, wrote an entire novel in Arabic thematically based on this hymn, titled *Kingdom of Strangers* [*Mamlakat al-ghurabā*]. For a translation into English, see Elias Khoury, *The Kingdom of Strangers*, translated by Paula Haydar (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1996).

¹²⁷ For instance, in Exodus 2:22 (NRSV), Moses famously names his own son Gershom because he too had been “an alien [*gêr*] residing in a foreign land.”

and subject to alien rule.”¹²⁸ Not only was galut representative of a social and political form of diaspora, but it was even considered equivalent to the concept of the gharīb for certain Arabic-speaking Jewish intellectuals. In particular, the Andalusian Jewish thinker Judah Halevi (d. 1141) equated *galut* with *ightirāb*, the process of becoming a gharīb, as both necessitate sojourning as a stranger in a foreign land.¹²⁹ Significantly, for Halevi, the concept of galut and gharīb were intimately tied to the formation of a religious community, which is an important function of the gharīb in the *Masnavī*, as I will argue in the next section.

Just as importantly, ‘Jewish’ understandings of the gharīb also encompassed the same metaphysical and theological dimension of the stranger in ‘Islamic’ thought. Another Jewish intellectual, the late 13th and early 14th century philosopher Judah ben Nissim Ibn Malkah, who likely resided in Morocco, wrote an entire treatise dedicated to this dimension of the ‘gharīb.’ Titled *Consolation of the Stranger [Uns al-Gharīb]*, this work takes the form of a dialog on the soul, which yearns for knowledge of “the forces that rule the world” and reveal God’s presence. As Colette Sirat and others have observed, in Judah ben Nissim’s understanding, the soul must die to the world in order to obtain such knowledge¹³⁰, because all creatures are ‘exiled’ within this metaphysical plane.¹³¹ As we have seen, this understanding of the gharīb is not altogether different

¹²⁸ Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, “Galut,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, edited by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 352.

¹²⁹ Halevi also employed both the terms *al-tagharrib* and *al-ightirāb* for emigration and estrangement, respectively. See Jonathan P. Decker, *Iberian Jewish Literature: Between Al-Andalus and Christian Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007) 1. For an overview of Halevi’s own pilgrimage, including Hebrew poetry on ‘strangers,’ see especially Raymond P. Scheindlin, *The Song of the Distant Dove: Judah Halevi’s Pilgrimage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹³⁰ Colette Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 259-262.

¹³¹ The term ‘gharīb’ was also used by the Jewish philosopher Maimonides (d. 1204) who used the word, in part, to convey the extraordinary. For a discussion on Maimonides’ use of the ‘gharīb,’ see

from Abū Ḥamza Khorāsānī's assertion that the *gharīb*'s homeland is not based in material reality or corporeal existence, despite the fact that one articulation of this idea represents 'Jewish' thought and the other represents an 'Islamic' counterpart.

Therefore, although the '*gharīb*' exists in a large body of implicitly or explicitly Islamic literature in Arabic as Rosenthal has masterfully demonstrated, the concept of the stranger as understood by Rūmī's *greater* interpretive community was informed by more than this single ḥadīth in particular, or 'Islam' in general. Certainly, in the examples we have seen hitherto, while Rūmī's community understood the history of their own movement through the context of this ḥadīth, they also internalized the meaning of the '*gharīb*' as the possessor of hidden prestige. Given that Rūmī allowed non-Muslims to interpret his teachings according to their own understandings, it is certainly probable that the *gharīb* bore other connotations for some of these peoples. Just as importantly, as I will argue in the following section, Rūmī framed the *gharīb*, that strange vessel of divine prestige and religious authority, within widely resonant and popular narrative frameworks favored by other near-contemporary authors. He thus attempted to make the *gharīb* speak to multiple peoples, in part on their own terms, to draw these communities more fully into Rūmī's mission in the lands of Rūm.

4. Rūmī's *Masnavī*: Emulation of the Stranger in the Lands of Rūm

In the previous section, I provided a broad overview of the *gharīb*, which Rūmī's family and followers understood as speaking to their own immediate circumstances, as well as

Avraham Nuri'el, *Galui Ye-Samui Ba-Filosofyah Ha-Yehudit Bi-Yeme Ha-Benayim*, (Jerusalem: Hotsa'at sefarim 'a. sh. Y.L. Magnes, ha-Universitah ha-'Ivrit, 2000), 158-164.

how those understandings intersected with a broader episteme about ‘strangers’ within and beyond Rūm. This episteme, I suggested, ultimately was not limited to ‘Islam’ or even to Classical Arabic or New Persian as literary languages, but also informed the theological, philosophical, and devotional texts of other peoples, including those of Christian and Jewish backgrounds.

In this section, I will continue to chart this episteme through the configuration of the gharīb in Rūmī’s masterpiece, the *Maṣnavī*. In so doing, I will argue that Rūmī invited Muslims and non-Muslims alike to investigate the stranger and become transformed as ‘true’ gharībs themselves, in essence joining a new religious community. Most importantly, I will argue here that Rūmī’s configuration of the gharīb was a fundamentally ‘connective’ act, allowing him not only to participate in an ongoing translocal conversation on the meaning of the ‘gharīb’ or Muslim’s ḥadīth, but also, in tandem with a constellation of other adaptations, to bring his polyvocal and heterogeneous audiences into a mutually comprehensible interpretive framework. In literary terms, this meant Rūmī had to address this community through a widely accessible and enticing poetic ‘voice.’ As I will argue in the following chapters, the subsequent configuration of the gharīb in literary Turkish and Middle Armenian were similarly ‘connective’ acts, albeit for different audiences and purposes, which can help us to understand the greater relationships between different literary languages and peoples in Rūm.

The gharīb appears in the very first story in the *Maṣnavī*, serving to embark with the reader on a program of spiritual discipline and estrangement from the ‘world.’ However, as I mentioned previously, Rūmī does not present this information in the form

of a dry scholarly treatise. Instead, he employs a variety of colorful narratives and storytelling conventions in order to communicate with his audience in accessible terms. In fact, as Forūzānfar has shown, Rūmī appropriated the narrative framework of this story from Nezāmī ‘Arūzī’s 12th century prose work in Persian, *The Four Discourses* [*Chahār maqāla*],¹³² in which the King of Gorgān invites the physician Avicenna [Ibn Sīnā] to diagnose his relative, a young man who had fallen deathly ill.¹³³ In Rūmī’s appropriation of this story, it is the King who falls deathly ill, and the physician, who appears as a gharīb, is none other than the immortal Kheẓr of the Qur’ān.

This tale begins when the Shāh spies a beautiful handmaiden along the road, falls madly in love, and swiftly abducts her. However, the handmaiden falls deathly ill as soon as she is separated from her loved ones and home. As obsession consumes him, the Shāh falls sick as well, and his royal physicians are equally useless in obtaining a cure. At his wit’s end, the Shāh dashes to a nearby mosque, where, prostrated by the *mehṛāb*, falls asleep in the midst of weeping and praying. Suddenly, an old man appears before the Shāh in a dream with good tidings:

O Shāh, good news: your prayers are answered.
If a gharīb come to you tomorrow, he is from Us.

For he comes from Us, he is a sagacious doctor.

¹³² Edward G. Browne makes the same observation in his English translation of *The Four Discourses*. See Nezāmī ‘Arūzī, *Revised Translation of the Chahār Maqāla ("Four Discourses")*, trans. Edward Granville Browne (London: Messrs. Luzac & co., 1921), 89.

¹³³ In Nezāmī ‘Arūzī’s tale, Avicenna carefully interviews the sickly young man, asking him about the streets and houses in his city, with one hand carefully clasped on the patient’s wrist. By feeling for a quickening of the pulse, Avicenna eventually gleans that the young man has fallen in love with a certain girl. The cure, Avicenna announces, is to marry these two youths immediately, which the King of course is happy to do.

Know his truthfulness, that he is honest and loyal.¹³⁴

Taking heart, the Shāh rises from his dream, and spends the next day in a cupola overlooking his realm, waiting for the gharīb, the one who would “reveal secrets.” Suddenly, the stranger appears in the distance, “a scholarly person, decked in opulence, a sun amongst shadows.¹³⁵” Yet, this stranger did not have a normal corporeal existence. Rūmī wrote that this figure “was not and yet was” [*nīst būd wa hast*] and had taken an “imaginary” [*khayālī*] form¹³⁶. The Shāh is so plainly overwhelmed at the sight of this ‘imaginary’ being that he runs to greet the stranger, declaring that “you were my beloved, not her.¹³⁷” The Shāh then begins to take the stranger’s council on how to regain his health.

Unlike Neẓāmī ‘Arūzī’s rather straightforward prose narrative, Rūmī makes it clear that his own retelling serves an allegorical purpose. In accordance with many classic Ṣūfī conceits, the Shāh represents the ‘self’ which has become captivated by the handmaiden, who embodies worldly attachment. The stranger’s role as divine physician is literally to “estrangle” the Shāh from the world. For this reason, the relationship between the gharīb and the Shāh echoes what is perhaps the most consistent aspect across the multivalent world of Ṣūfī practices: the relationship between the *pīr*, or elder, and the disciple. In fact, Rūmī uses the meeting between the stranger and the Shāh to discuss how the whole world would be set on fire without the discipline of *adab*, which translates loosely as ‘manners,’ but involves an entire set of behaviors meant to discipline the

¹³⁴ Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Maṣnavī-ye Ma‘navī*, ed. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, vol. 1 (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1984), 48.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 48.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 48.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 48.

carnal body and align the self with the social and celestial order. In this case, the appearance of a gharīb ushers in the crucial concept of *adab* and spiritual discipline in the *Masnavī*, serving as a kind of pīr, or elder guide, for the forlorn Shāh.

When the divine physician finally examines the handmaiden, he observes that the other doctors have failed because “they were uninformed of [her] inner state,” and that the true nature of her illness stems from a “secret of the heart.”¹³⁸ Just as Avicenna interviews the youth in Neẓāmī ‘Arūzī’s story, this physician also places his hand on the pulse of the handmaiden in this narrative, asking her about her hometown and the streets in her neighborhood. Through this same method, the physician discovers that she secretly loves a blacksmith from another city, who is quickly summoned to the Shāh’s palace with the promise of great treasure and honor. Of course, this never happens: instead, the physician poisons this blacksmith until his beauty and life wither away, and the handmaiden is freed of her attachment to him. Rūmī notes that the simple person does not understand this secret: because the soul of the Shāh was bound to the handmaiden, it was only through the help of the “physician,” a strange spiritual guide, that the handmaiden was able to free herself from worldly attachment. To the uninitiated, this process might seem like death, but to Rūmī, releasing the self from worldly attachment is a necessary stage one must pass through to gain *adab*.

At the most basic level, then, this is literally the allegory of a pīr who is trying to make a student understand *his or her own affliction* caused by worldly attachment. Rūmī further underscores this point by interrupting the narrative to address his own student, Chalabī, and teach him that it is “better that the secret of lovers be spoken through the

¹³⁸ Ibid., 50.

stories of others.”¹³⁹ Rūmī also evokes the relationship with his own spiritual ‘guide,’ Shams al-Dīn-e Tabrīzī, whom he indirectly compares to the “sun amongst the shadows,” the gharīb physician. In fact, there are essentially three master-student relationships at play throughout this narrative: the gharīb and Shāh; Shams and Rūmī; Rūmī and Chalabī. For all intents of purposes, the gharīb, Shams al-Dīn, and Rūmī are functionally collapsed into the same person, as they all attempt to illuminate new epistemic horizons for their student through the stories of ‘others.’

It is highly appropriate that the most quintessential of ‘others,’ the gharīb, initiates both the Shāh and the audience of the *Masnavī* to take part in this process of cultivating adab. Nor is the divine physician any ordinary master, but rather is eventually revealed to be Kheẓr, the ‘green’ saint of the Qur’ān.¹⁴⁰ The gharīb in this tale not only has divine authority and prestige, but furthermore serves as a model to emulate for both the Shāh and, by extension, the ‘audience’ of any pīr. The implication here is that ultimately, our own encounter with the *Masnavī* will be similar to the meeting of the stranger and the Shāh.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 50.

¹⁴⁰ In the Qur’ān, God sends a servant and “friend” traditionally identified as Kheẓr to instruct Moses [Mūsa]. While Moses pledges to submit to Kheẓr’s will, he breaks his pledge again and again, unable to understand Kheẓr’s extremely strange and wicked seeming behavior. Just as Kheẓr kills the blacksmith in Rūmī’s tale, he similarly acts wickedly in the Qur’ān by destroying a perfectly fine ship, murdering a young man, and repairing a wall near a city which had acted ungraciously toward guests. In disbelief, Moses questions the saint’s actions, but the saint replies that there was a hidden reason behind each ‘crime’: the boat would have fallen into malicious hands; the young man would have dishonored his parents; and in repairing the wall, the saint ensured the ungracious town would never find the treasure buried there. Rūmī’s interpretation of this account in the Qur’ān and the first story in the *Masnavī* ultimately illustrate the same point: one needs a spiritual guide, no matter how strange, in order to discern the ‘inner’ secret of things. In this sense, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the ‘gharīb’ Kheẓr serves as a synecdoche for the entire program of the *Masnavī*. For a discussion on the relationship between Moses and Kheẓr in Šūfī discourse, see also Hugh Talat Halman, “‘Where Two Seas Meet’: The Quranic Story of Khidr and Moses in Sufi Commentaries as a Model for Spiritual Guidance” (PhD diss, Duke University, 2000).

Another allegory from the fifth book of the *Maṣnavī* further makes this point even more explicitly through an exegesis of Muslim’s enigmatic ḥadīth, “Islam began as a gharīb.” While the first tale adopts the perspective of the Shāh, who never departs from his native country, Rūmī’s exegesis in book five focuses on the unsettling experience of being a stranger in a strange land, which serves as another allegory for the opposition between soul and body, but also for the relationship between true ‘gharībs’ and the spiritually undisciplined. Ultimately, this tale invites the audience to investigate the ‘other,’ the true gharīb, and thereby become a gharīb oneself. As I will argue, this narrative also raises important parallels between the ‘strangers’ of other religions.

Our tale begins when a hunter captures a young gazelle and imprisons the poor “gharīb” in a stable with cattle and donkeys.¹⁴¹ The gharīb gazelle flees in every direction out of terror, but he is hemmed in on all sides by the mockery of donkeys and a thick, smothering straw-dust. While Rūmī outlined the importance of examining the spiritual conditions of others in the first story, here he warns that spending time with those who are totally “opposite” [*zedd*] to oneself is a punishment “considered to be as death¹⁴²,” just as the soul is afflicted in the prison of the body:¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ The gazelle is called a “gharīb” in the longest title which introduces this story, although not all recensions of the *Maṣnavī* include the long form of this title, and consequently the gazelle is not explicitly labeled as a “gharīb” in all recensions of the text. However, the longest title exists in the oldest extant recension of the *Maṣnavī*, the Konya Manuscript, which was completed in 1278, and that is what I have chosen to quote here. This is also the title that Reynold Nicholson quotes in his critical edition of the *Maṣnavī*. The title reads in full: “The story of the imprisonment of that young gazelle within a stable for donkeys and the derision of those donkeys toward that gharīb [the gazelle], sometimes in conflict and sometimes in mockery, and his suffering due to the dry straw which was not his food. And this description is of the elect slave of God among the people of the world and the people of the passion and lust. For, Islam began as a stranger [*gharīban*] and will return as a stranger [*gharīban*], therefore blessed are the strangers. The truth of the messenger of God.”

¹⁴² Rūmī, *Maṣnavī*, vol. 3, 54.

¹⁴³ Rūmī characteristically explains the plight of the gazelle through the analogous example of Solomon’s hoopoe bird, which he modifies from a variety of other sources, including the Qur’ān (27: 20-21). In the Qur’ānic version, Solomon notices that the hoopoe is missing from his assembly of animals one day. Solomon swears that if the hoopoe cannot give an account of its absence, he will punish it with a

Behold, which is that punishment, reliable one?
Being in a cell with others not of your own kind.¹⁴⁴

From this body, you are in agony, O man:
the partridge of your spirit is bound to another kind.

The spirit [*rūh*] is a falcon and material nature is crows.
The falcon bears scars from the owls and crows.¹⁴⁵

As we have already seen, Rūmī defines a spiritual state (being bound to corporeal reality) through a readily understandable social phenomenon (being cast among those “opposite” to oneself).¹⁴⁶ In many ways, this is an elaboration on ‘gharīb’ from book one. First, we observed that the affliction of the self, or *nafs*, is due to worldly attachment, and here the spirit, or *rūh*, likewise suffers because of its entanglement with corporeal reality. Yet, unlike book one, wherein the Shāh needed the help of an outsider to diagnose his condition, the protagonist of this story *is* the gharīb, and is already fully cognizant of the

punishment beyond all reckoning. The bird, as it turns out, has an excellent excuse, and provides Solomon with a detailed account of a far off land, the sun-worshiping kingdom of Sheba. But for Rūmī, no excuse is provided, and instead he uses the story as an opportunity to clarify what a “punishment beyond all reckoning” means.

As Foruzānfar has noted, Tha’labī’s 11th century *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, or *Stories of the Prophets*, was likely a source that Rūmī used to compose many stories about Solomon and the hoopoe throughout the *Masnavī*. Lewis has further noted that similar stories about Solomon and the hoopoe exist in a wide body of literature during this period. See Lewis, *Rumi*, 289.

¹⁴⁴ Elsewhere in the *Manāqeb al-‘ārefīn*, Shams-al-Dīn Tabrīzī declared that those who are ‘opposite’ to one’s own kind are *bīgāna* (lit. unknown person), which also means stranger, and often carried a more negative connotation. (See Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-‘ārefīn*, vol. 1, 283). Rūmī sometimes distinguished between the gharīb and *bīgāna*, but it should be noted he generally does not use either word in a rigorously technical way.

¹⁴⁵ Rūmī, *Masnavī*, vol. 3, 54.

¹⁴⁶ Rūmī additionally uses another tale to gloss his own story at this point in the narrative. This story concerns Abū Bakr, who was hiding in the city of Sabzavār, which represents the world, and the Khvārazmshāh, who signifies God. In this allegory, the Khvārazmshāh surrounds the wicked city of Sabzavār, demanding the city give up Abū Bakr. In short, the story serves to comment upon how God does not regard the external appearance of men, but rather weighs their inward hearts. Demanding Abū Bakr from the wicked city of Sabzavār, or the world, is akin to demanding a pure spirit or heart both from a particular people as well as from one’s carnal self.

material causes of his suffering. Estrangement from the world is no longer the goal, then, but a reality that one must pass through before the final stage of union with God (*tawhīd*).

Rūmī elaborates on what it means to live as a *gharīb*, or as the soul in a carnal body, through dialog between the gazelle and one of the more sympathetic donkeys. Many of the donkeys upbraid the gazelle, saying “be quiet!” Others chime in with mockery: “Ha! This wild one has the nature of Shāhs and Amirs,” or “Let this delicate one be propped up on the throne of the Shāh!” But one donkey, after becoming sick from indigestion, invites the gazelle to finish his own supper of straw. Surprisingly, the gazelle turns him down. When the donkey accuses the gazelle of “putting on a haughty air,¹⁴⁷” the gazelle in turn replies:

That food is yours,
since from it, you are fresh and alive.

I have been an intimate of the meadow,
I have been tranquil amongst brooks and gardens.

If Fate thrusts us into torment,
How should the nature and temperament of excellency depart?

If I am reduced to poverty, how shall I have a beggar’s countenance?
If my clothes are old, I am new.¹⁴⁸

The gazelle may exhibit all the trappings of a vagrant beggar, but what ultimately sets him apart from the donkey is “the nature and temperament of excellency.” While this dialog between gazelle and donkey indisputably serves as a commentary on the opposition between spirit and body, on another level Rūmī distinguishes here between

those who are spiritually disciplined, having cultivated upright behavior and adab, from those whose carnal self is unbridled like the donkey. In fact, the Qur'ān notes that “the ugliest of all voices is the braying of asses” (31:19),¹⁴⁹ which Rūmī understood as a commentary on both the carnal self and undisciplined groups of people. In one report by Aflaki, Rūmī illuminated the meaning of this verse by equating the figure of the donkey with both the carnal self *and* with people who do not know the way of God:

Thus the donkey is forever a bondsman of the genitals and the gullet. In the same way every person who has no longing for God and no lament for love in his heart, and in his head has no amorous passion and no secret, in the eyes of God Most High he is less than the donkey: *They are like cattle, nay rather they are further astray* (7:179). God protect us from this!¹⁵⁰

In other words, the distinction between the spiritually disciplined and the undisciplined person is like the divide between soul and body, gazelle and donkey, foreign and familiar, and ultimately the co-mingling of the two would be like mixing “musk and manure in only one bowl.”¹⁵¹ Furthermore, those without this discipline, or generally, those without *adab* [*bī-adab*], notice that the gazelle acts strangely, but they attribute these strange behaviors to “haughty airs” for the simple reason that they are unable to perceive the inner state of the true Muslim¹⁵², who is a *gharīb*. The most egregious error that the donkeys commit is in thinking that the gazelle is really like them, but the *gharīb* is

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 58.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 58-59.

¹⁴⁹ *The Qur'ān*, trans. M. A. Abdel Hareem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 262.

¹⁵⁰ O'Kane, trans., *Feats of the Knowers*, 82-83.

¹⁵¹ Rūmī, *Maṣnavī*, vol. 3, 58.

¹⁵² Although Rūmī has recently been championed (and consequently marketed to American and European booksellers) as a premodern harbinger of religious universalism, from this perspective, the fundamental difference between those who have *adab* and those who are *bī-adab* is a distinction which he in fact must preserve.

nothing like the donkey. As a result, the other stable animals cannot help but misunderstand the gazelle's reasons for abstaining from the hay. Rūmī makes this final point quite clear in his exegesis of Muslim's ḥadīth, to which we can now turn our attention.

The donkey, again misunderstanding the gazelle, replies that it is easy to “brag and brag” in a “strange [*gharībī*] land,” since there are no intimates who can authenticate any details about the stranger's life.¹⁵³ But the gazelle rebukes the donkey, saying that the carnal nature of the donkeys is such that they are cognitively unable to discern the gazelle's inner nature:

My own navel bears witness.
It bestows grace upon aloes-wood and ambergris.

But who hears that? The one with a sense of smell [*mashām*].
It is unlawful [*ḥarām*] for the donkey who is full of dung.

The donkey smells the urine of donkeys on the path.
How should I present musk to this company?¹⁵⁴

Rūmī then intercedes in this dialog and plainly states that “because of this, the obedient Prophet spoke the riddle [*ramz*]: Islam is a *gharīb* in the world.”¹⁵⁵ Rūmī's exegesis of the ḥadīth in some ways mirrors the interpretation which held that the first Muslim community was small and scorned by the world, and for that reason, Islam began as a *gharīb*. Yet Rūmī goes a step further, and posits Moḥammad himself as a *gharīb*, “because even [the Prophet's] relatives were turning away from him, although angels are

¹⁵³ Ibid., 59.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 59.

intimates with his essence.”¹⁵⁶ Others, however, make the same mistake as the donkeys by failing to understand this fundamental difference. “People see his face as [their own] kind,” Rūmī notes, but just like the donkeys cannot detect the sweet-smelling musk from the navel of the gazelle, or like the community which fails to recognize the authority of the stranger, so the true Muslim’s relatives “don't notice that fragrance on him.”¹⁵⁷

In this light, the relationship that Moḥammad has with the body of Islam bears remarkable similarity to the relationship between pīr and disciple as reflected in Rūmī’s own community. Just as Shams left Rūmī in an ecstatic state and Kheẓr brought the Shāh back from death’s door, the radical alterity of the gharīb, with Moḥammad as its archetype, has the power to completely upset and then reconfigure the social and spiritual orientation of others. In these examples, being a ‘stranger’ is not an intrinsic state, but rather comes as the result of purposefully emulating other ‘strangers.’ Rūmī makes this point clear by asserting that Moḥammad, or any true Muslim, has the power to transform the nature of others:

He is just like a lion in the image of a cow:
See him from a distance but do not investigate him.

If you investigate, depart from the cow—let’s say it’s the body—
For the lion-natured one will render the cow limb from limb.

He will remove the nature of cows from your head.
He will remove animal nature from the animal.

Should you be a cow, near him, you’ll become a lion.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 59.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 59.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 59.

If you are happy as a cow, do not seek the lion.¹⁵⁸

True difference, this passage suggests, is not based on kind or genus, such as donkey and gazelle, cow and lion, easterner and westerner, or perhaps even Muslim and non-Muslim, but rather is determined by one's inner state, a state which appears 'strangely' to those who have not yet been initiated. As in the first story of the *Masnavī*, which informed Rūmī's audience that they would learn about their own spiritual condition through the stories of others, the tale of the donkey and gazelle likewise reaches beyond the internal world of the narrative to address the interpretive community of Konya directly. *We* are invited to investigate the lion, gazelle, physician, and gharīb, even though we might only be 'cattle,' 'donkeys,' or 'Shāhs' whose carnal nature still reigns over spiritual matters. Again, the distinction here is not necessarily between Muslim and non-Muslim, but between those who follow Rūmī and those who do not—between true 'gharībs' and those whom have not yet had the "animal nature" removed from their heads.

For Rūmī, to investigate the stranger means, fundamentally, to be willing to become 'strange' oneself. What is particularly significant about the gharīb, however, is that it operates as a synecdoche for Rūmī's overall strategies and aims of his own literary production, as the figure seamlessly blends a wide variety of theological commentary in Arabic and Persian with a widely resonant and even 'popular' literary figure. Furthermore, as I noted in the previous section, the concept of the stranger as possessing hidden or divine prestige is not an Islamic concept, but rather is a concept which *coincides* with Islam, as it arguably constituted part of a greater episteme which transcended individual languages and religions. If stories such as the gazelle and donkey

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 59.

were sincerely intended to be widely consumed by the heterogeneous peoples of Konya and beyond, as Rūmī himself has made clear time and time again,¹⁵⁹ then this figure would have served as an easily comprehensible vehicle for conveying particular theological concepts.

In fact, we do not have to speculate whether this story about the gharīb gazelle, which represents the spirit within the body *as well as* the Prophet amongst the unbelievers, could have resonated with other peoples such as Christians. In some ways, the story of the gazelle and donkey reflects a variation on a story found in the second book of the *Masnavī*, wherein we are asked to consider the difference between *Jesus* and the donkey.¹⁶⁰ By upbraiding his audience for “having abandoned Jesus, but nourished the donkey,” Rūmī goes on to equate Jesus with the intellect, ‘*aql*, which Bahā’ al-Dīn named a gharīb in Khorāsān:

The fortune of Jesus is knowledge [*‘elm*] and knowing God [*ma’refat*],
It is not the fortune of the donkey, oh you, [who are] like a donkey!

Have compassion on Jesus, do not have compassion for the donkey.
Do not make the nature [of the donkey] the master over one’s mind [*‘aql*].¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ A report by Aflākī captures this intention beautifully: “It is also transmitted that one day Shams al-Dīn, the son of Modarres, was asleep in his room and out of thoughtlessness and negligence he had placed *The Masnavī* behind his back. Suddenly Mowlānā came in and saw the book like that. He said: ‘So these words of mine came for this purpose, to fall into obscurity? By God, by God, from the place where the sun rises to the place where it sets, this meaning will establish itself, and it will go forth to the different climes and there will be no gathering and assembly where these words are not recited—to the point where it will be recited in temples and on stone benches, and all the nations will be dressed in the robes of this speech and will have their share in it.’” See O’Kane, trans., *Feats of the Knowers*, 299.

¹⁶⁰ As Schimmel has observed, the trope of the donkey and Jesus is found throughout Rūmī’s writings, where the donkey is associated with the body and Jesus with the soul. Just as in the example of the gharīb gazelle who has a sweet fragrance, Schimmel notes: “In Rūmī’s verse one finds very coarse association of the donkey’s smelly, foul backside with the fragrance that emerges from Christ, the soul—“what has Jesus’s cradle to do with a donkey’s tail?”” See Schimmel, “Christian Influences,” in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, online edition.

In this case, not only is Jesus equated with ‘*aql*, but he also possesses the same qualities of the gazelle among the donkeys, as he is the true sovereign among carnal ‘peoples.’ Furthermore, Rūmī also proclaims that Jesus is a divine physician much in the same way that the gharīb Kheẓr is a divine physician in the first tale of the *Masnavī*. Although the audience of this tale has become ‘like donkeys,’ Rūmī commands them: “do not forsake Jesus.” He explains further that while their sickness has come from Jesus, so will their health, and they must trust his guidance over their own carnal selves in spiritual matters. While Jesus is not labeled as a ‘gharīb’ in this passage, he still acts much like a spiritual guide, or pīr, would among his own followers, as he also frees the ‘donkey’ from its own ‘animal nature,’ or worldly attachments. In this case, the figure of Jesus, like the figure of Moḥammad, Rūmī, Shams, Kheẓr, or any true gharīb, ultimately has the power to bring a community into a new spiritual and temporal orientation.

Nor is this conceptual overlap between ‘Christian’ figures who are prominent in Islam limited to discussions on Christ. In another tale from the second book of the *Masnavī*, we learn about a Ṣūfī who is slandered by his brethren before the pīr of their community. However, when the Ṣūfī defends himself before the pīr, the narrative likens him directly to Kheẓr, who appeared as a stranger before the worldly physicians in the first tale of the *Masnavī*. This Ṣūfī likewise extols the importance of the gharīb, as the stranger’s voice (alternatively, the ‘strange voice’) has the power to transform both individuals and communities:

In the heart of every community which perceives God,¹⁶²
The face and voice [*āvāz*] of the prophet is a miracle.

¹⁶¹ Rūmī, *Masnavī*, vol. 1, 348.

When the prophet issues a cry on the outside,
The soul of the community is prostrated on the inside

Because this very cry has not been heard [before],
In all the world, by the ear of the soul.

This gharīb [the soul], by listening¹⁶³ to voice of the gharīb [*āvāz-e gharīb*]¹⁶⁴,
Has heard from the tongue of God: *I am near* [*enna qarīb*].¹⁶⁵

The first ‘stranger’ in the penultimate line refers the soul of a believer, and by metonymic extension, to the true believer herself. Similarly, the prophet or strange voice calling upon the believer to join him is *also* a gharīb. Again, as we have seen previously, the gharīb brings about a transformation on a widespread scale (the entire community) as well as on an individual scale (the soul of a single believer).

But who is the stranger, or the strange voice, calling to this community?

Arguably, as we have seen throughout this section, this *āvāz* is textured with many voices: Kheẓr and Shams, Rūmī and Moḥammad, Moses and Chalabī, and the other figures who fulfill the roles of pīr and disciple within the *Masnavī*. However, the very next line, which begins a new subsection, concerns a different prophet altogether: John the Baptist, or Yaḥyā, who bowed to worship Jesus within the womb of his mother, just like the prostration of the gharīb-soul at the sound of the Gharīb’s voice. These stories are connected because the relationship between Jesus and John is like the relationship between the ‘prophet’ and the ‘community,’ and therefore both figures are equivalent to

¹⁶² Literally, “which [has] the taste [of] God.”

¹⁶³ Literally, “by tasting.”

¹⁶⁴ Alternatively, “strange voice” or “strange song.”

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 449. Ṣādeq Gowharīn reads ‘gharīb’ here as a metaphor for the soul’s separation from God. See Ṣādeq Gowharīn, *Farhang-e Loghāt va Ta’bīrāt-e Masnavī*, vol. 7 (Tehran: Ketābfurūshī-e Zavvār, 1983), 20.

the gharīb. As we have already seen, Rūmī was not the only person who directly or indirectly equated John the Baptist with the gharīb. Al-Jonayd defined one of the fundamental qualities of Ṣūfīsm through the prophet John, who for him was the quintessential gharīb, providing a model of ascetic denial for subsequent Ṣūfī movements in the centuries to come.

This brings us back to the most important point of this chapter: in this case, the *concept* of the gharīb, as well of the stranger’s ‘voice,’ would have been broadly familiar to Christians and Muslims alike, even in its specifically ‘Islamic’ orientation. After all, the four Gospel writers each characterized John the Baptist as “the voice [*phōnē*] crying in the wilderness” to make straight the paths of the Lord.¹⁶⁶ Quite literally, in Ṣūfīsm and in Christianity, John is the wanderer who calls upon a particular community to renounce its worldly attachments and join a new covenant. This, we ought to recall, is not only the purpose of Rūmī’s ‘gharīb,’ but also one of the overall functions of the *Maṣnavī*, which likewise sought to estrange the audience from previous social and worldly attachments in order to establish a new socio-religious order.

Of course, the ‘voice crying in the wilderness’ is not Christian in origin, but comes from the Book of Isaiah 40:3-6 (NRSV), which similarly articulates the speech of God through the voice of the prophet:

A voice [לִּיָּקוֹל, *gol*] cries out:
“In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low;
the uneven ground shall become level, the rough places a plain.

¹⁶⁶ See Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; and John 1:23.

Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all the people shall see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Generally speaking, in all three examples, the ‘voice’ crying on the ‘outside’ brings about a radical transformation within the community and individual believer, bringing both into a closer proximity with God. Could Christian and Jewish audiences of the *Maṣnavī* have interpreted the figure of the gharīb through these prophetic frameworks already familiar to them? Certainly, as I have already shown, we have evidence to suggest this was the case in Konya. Take, for instance, the funeral procession of Rūmī in 1273: Aflākī reports that Christians, Jews, Greeks, Arabs, and Turks publicly mourned Rūmī’s death in 1273 by reading aloud from the *Torah, Psalms, and the Gospels*. When questioned about their behavior, these Jews and Christians replied that they grieved because Rūmī had revealed new interpretations of their *own* religious idioms:

We came to understand the truth of Moses and the truth of Jesus and of all the prophets because of his clear explanation, and we beheld in him the behavior of the perfect prophets we read about in our [sacred] books. If you Muslims call Mowlānā the Moḥammad of your time, we recognize him to be the Moses of the era and the Jesus of the age.¹⁶⁷

Rūmī’s son, Solṭān Valad, corroborates aspects of this report, noting that Greeks and Turks rent their garments at the death of his father, even though these peoples belonged to other religions. Even these miraculous *reports* about Rūmī’s death likewise utilize widely comprehensible topoi and imagery—as Lewis has observed, the earthquakes which wreck Konya in Sepahsālār and Solṭān Valad’s accounts following Rūmī’s death

are reminiscent of the earthquake following the crucifixion of Christ.¹⁶⁸ Further, as I have already demonstrated in the previous sections, Rūmī encouraged the peoples of Rūm to interpret his teachings according to their own understanding, even as he strove to transmit his message in a way suitable to his heterogeneous interpretive community—to re-present to them, in a sense, what they already knew, but to do so in a ‘strange’ voice.

But what, exactly, is this strange voice which has the power to awaken and transform a ‘strange’ community? The word Rūmī uses here is *āvāz*, which has a secondary meaning of ‘song.’ Just as importantly, *āvāz* holds a special relationship with the recitation of metrical poetry, and as G. Tsuge notes, with the *Maṣnavī* of Rūmī in particular. In contradistinction to a more fixed musical form, *āvāz* is classified as a song which the individual performer can adapt and improvise freely upon.¹⁶⁹ No two performances of the same *āvāz* need be identical, in other words, even though they both serve as fluid adaptations of the same musical tune. In an analogous sense, Rūmī’s practice of literary appropriation speaks to an equally fluid mode of interpretive ‘improvisation,’ producing variations on similar narratives, analogies, and literary figures—such as the *gharīb*—for diverse audiences. Nor was that ‘voice’ entirely his own. Again, as we have seen, Rūmī labored to ‘re-voice’ the literary and religious conventions which constituted the episteme of this period, to which his audience *also*

¹⁶⁷ O’Kane, trans., *Feats of the Knowers*, 405.

¹⁶⁸ In other words, regardless of the literal veracity of these reports, they indisputably reflect a practice of incorporating the religious ‘vocabularies’ of others into a widely comprehensible interpretive framework. Lewis, *Rumi*, 223.

¹⁶⁹ As G. Tsuge has observed, “In particular the term refers to improvised passages following the original vocal style and adapting it into the instrumental version. In this context, the term *āvāz* is contrasted to *zārbī*, which is characterized as a section played in a fixed meter (usually with the *tonbak/zārb* or drum accompaniment). Since the *bī-zārb* (non-metric) rhythmic texture predominates and constitutes the main body of the so-called *dastgāh* music, the term *āvāz* is sometimes used in the sense of “classical Iranian music,” both vocal and instrumental.” See G. Tsuge, “Avaz,” in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, online edition, 2011, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/avaz>.

gave voice. The listener recognizes the stranger's voice in part because of its *familiarity*, even when it comes from 'on the outside,' in other words. In the final passage we examined from the *Masnavi*, the stranger's voice therefore serves to collapse the inside and outside, Christian and Muslim, believer and non-believer, in the interpretive framework which Rūmī constructed for his heterogeneous community.

If we return to that fateful night when Rūmī unwound the first line of the *Masnavi* from a strip on his turban, we find that the central metaphor of the entire book reflects the patchwork, polyvocal mode in which his audience would later encounter his teachings. "Listen to the reed (flute) as it makes grievance," the first line famously instructs its audience. We are commanded literally and metaphorically, right from the very moment the *Masnavi* came into being, to listen to an *āvāz*: the voice of Muḥammad, the voice of Jesus, the voice of Moses. The voice of the *Masnavi*, singing into existence a community of strangers.

5. Conclusion: The Stranger's Invitation

As I have argued throughout this chapter, in order to bring the 'cattle' of Konya into the den of the lion, Rūmī had to communicate in a way which would be widely accessible while still introducing translocal discourses on Ṣūfism and Islam. This required Rūmī to acknowledge a wide constellation of ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences, while still finding a resonant manner of bringing those different peoples, to different degrees, into the same social and theological fold.



Fig. 5: Rūmī's funeral, as attended by Christians and Jews, carrying their holy books, below. From an abridged translation of Aflākī into Turkish, c. 1590. Pierpont Morgan, MS M.466, fols. 124r.

This basic principle, which undergirded much of Rūmī’s literary production, is encapsulated perfectly in another story from the first book of the *Masnavī*. In this tale, Rūmī describes the ability of Solomon to speak with each of the different birds in his retinue, although these birds had their own distinct paroles and dialects. Rūmī notes that speaking in the same language [*hamzabān*] is less important than operating with the same heart [*hamdelī*], or sharing a kind of mutual comprehension which transcends ethnic groups and individual languages: “Oh [how] many Indians and Turks [share] the same language, oh, [how] many pairs of Turks are [still] like strangers [*bīgānagān*]” to one another, he laments. Rūmī goes on to argue that being of the same mind or heart is “better than [being] of the same language,” because speaking the same tongue does not guarantee a common framework within which meaning can be transmitted and correctly interpreted.¹⁷⁰

Along similar lines, I have argued here that Rūmī likewise ‘voiced’ an easily accessible literary figure—the gharīb—as part of a greater, overarching strategy to communicate effectively with his own heterogeneous interpretive community. As we have seen throughout Rūmī’s literary activity, he labored to introduce complicated ‘higher meanings’ in highly resonant and widely accessible forms, as he appropriated not only a large canon of translocal texts in Arabic and Persian, but also a variety of ‘popular’ musical and literary forms, narratives, tropes, and figures. In particular, the figure of the gharīb not only reflects a widespread topos found throughout world literature in the premodern age—the notion of the stranger as possessing secret authority and prestige—but also evokes a large body of commentary on the original authority of Islam, which had ‘strange’ beginnings, as the ḥadīth says. The figure of the gharīb

¹⁷⁰ Rūmī, *Masnavī*, vol. 1, 75.

arguably mattered to Rūmī's interpretive community because it both adapted and evoked a large body of translocal commentary, rooted in major canonical texts of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, to articulate Rūmī's own authority to a heterogeneous and ultimately multi-religious audience in Konya.

Rūmī in Konya, like Solomon among his birds, wanted to organize his community through mutually intelligible literary, social, and religious framework. His invitation for others to become 'gharībs,' to give up the attachments to this world and to follow his teachings, utilized a wide and variegated spectrum of literary conventions directed toward Muslims and non-Muslims alike, allowing Rūmī to become *hamdelī* instead of merely being *hamzabān*. As I will argue in the following chapters, it is a simple fact that the gharīb spoke to many peoples and religions, as it was adapted by Turkish and Armenian speakers with the development of Anatolian Turkish and Middle Armenian as literary languages immediately following Rūmī's death. Most importantly, as I will posit in the following chapters, by mapping the multiple configurations of the gharīb across literary languages, it becomes clear that Rūmī's omnivorous strategy of reconfiguring the literary forms and figures of 'others' was not an anomaly at this time. Rather, this practice was commonplace in the lands of Rūm, whose peoples may not have shared the same tongue, but to a certain extent, were of the same 'heart.'

Chapter Two

A Covenant of Strangers: Early Configurations of Literary Turkish

Hey you, who knows the source of words —
Come, speak: whence does this word come?
The one who doesn't comprehend the source of words
Assumes this word comes from me.

The word is not from black or white;
It is not from reading or writing.
It is not from this sojourning people,
It comes from the Voice [*avazından*] of the Creator.

— Yūnus Emre¹⁷¹

We are strangers [*bīgāna*] in this land, and we have taken this realm by force [...]
You [are] Turks and are from the army of Khorāsān.

—Alp Arslān, speaking to the Saljūq elite, as recorded by Neẓām al-Molk¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Yūnus Emre, *Yunus Emre Divānı*, ed. Mustafa Tatçı, vol. 2 (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990),

1. Introduction: Literary Language and Community

We began with a moment of composition: Rūmī's unveiling of the first distich of the *Maṣnavī-ye Ma'navī*, inscribed on the cloth of his turban. We now return to that moment through an act of appropriation.

In 1301, Rūmī's son and eventual successor, Solṭān Valad, began to write the *Rabāb-nāma* [*The Book of the Rebec*], a new maṣnavī meant to elucidate and further expound upon the inner secrets of mystical discourse in Konya. It was Solṭān Valad who wrote the first account of his father's life in the *Valad-nāma* [*The Book of Valad*], and it would be Solṭān Valad's writings which arguably shaped the legitimacy and mission of the Mowlavī order in the centuries to come. The *Rabāb-nāma*, like all of Solṭān Valad's literary production, helped to lay the groundwork for codifying, interpreting, and institutionalizing Rūmī's teachings.

The *Rabāb-nāma* is rather upfront about its role in both constructing and drawing from the legitimacy of the *Maṣnavī*. The work opens with the simple statement that Solṭān Valad wrote this new “maṣnavī-ye ma'navī” at the behest of an esteemed companion who desired a book in the meter [*vazn*] of Rūmī's *Maṣnavī*, because Solṭān Valad had *already* written a previous book in the meter [*vazn*] of Sanā'ī's *Elāhī-nāma*.¹⁷² This time, it would be better if the *Rabāb-nāma* was based on Rūmī's own masterpiece, since the companions of Solṭān Valad had “grown accustomed to that *vazn* from many

¹⁷² Neẓām al-Molk, *Seyar al-molūk: Seyāsat-nāma*, ed. Hubert Darke (Tehran: Bongāh-e Tarjama va Nashr-e Ketāb, 1961), 204-205.

¹⁷³ Solṭān Valad, *Rabāb-nāma*, ed. 'Alī Solṭānī Gerdfarāmarzī (Tehran: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, Tehran Branch, 1980), 1.

recitations.” Solṭān Valad responded to this request by quoting the famous opening of his father’s masterpiece: ‘Listen to this reed as it makes grievance; it tells the tale of separations,’ further noting that because this *vazn* “is seated in the nature [of the companions],” he would compose a new book in the meter and structure [*nezamī*] of the *Masnavī*.¹⁷⁴

However, by writing in the meter and style of his father’s masterpiece, Solṭān Valad did more than merely mimic this work. As we have seen in chapter one, when Ḥusām al-Dīn Chalabī requested a new didactic *maṣnavī* in the *vazn* and *ṭarz* [‘meter’ and ‘style’] of works by ‘Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī, he didn’t mean for Rūmī to replicate the prosody of those books only. Instead, Chalabī wanted a new interpretive framework which would render translocal Persian discourses accessible to a local, or at least contemporary, audience. Consequently, when Rūmī drew from the ‘meter’ and ‘style’ of ‘Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī, he wasn’t merely appropriating particular metrical forms, but rather he was positioning himself within a new literary genealogy of his own fashioning; a literary genealogy which privileged ‘Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī over even the Qur’ān. Sometimes this was contentious work, but it was always work in which Rūmī knew that interpretations of the *Masnavī* would both mediate and be mediated by the other significant texts within his interpretive community.

Within this particular context, to write in a preexisting ‘meter and mode’ represents a process of encoding a text in a way which deliberately engages with a previously received body of literature; a process which emphasizes engagement with certain texts over others in an effort to shape the ways in which an audience receives particular groupings of literature. For example, when Rūmī wrote in the *vazn* and *ṭarz* of

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 1.

Sanā'ī, he helped ensure that Sanā'ī's own work would not be interpreted within the context of the Ghaznavid court, but as part and parcel of Rūmī's own literary production in Konya. In the case of the *Rabāb-nāma*, by the time that Solṭān Valad took up his father's life work, Rūmī had already succeeded in priming his greater community to receive Sanā'ī and 'Aṭṭār in a particular manner. No longer was it necessary to place the inner secrets of older maṣnavīs within a new interpretive framework, but, as the esteemed supplicant urges in the passage above, the task that lay ahead was in discovering how to re-present the *vazn* of the *Maṣnavī* — the structural matrix of its hermeneutic authority — in equally versatile and socially contingent forms.

The *Rabāb-nāma* serves as a prime example of how appropriating the literary conventions of 'others' can endow a new author with authority, while at the same time, how such practices of appropriation allow authors to communicate with an audience already familiar with a previous literary style, even while reinterpreting what that 'style' means. However, the major difference between Rūmī's *Maṣnavī* and Solṭān Valad's *Rabāb-nāma* is not in the choice of literary 'meter and mode,' but in the selection of literary *language*. Whereas Rūmī wrote largely in Persian, Solṭān Valad composed in Persian, classical Arabic, 'colloquial' Turkish, and 'colloquial' Greek, encoding each of these languages in the meter and mode of his father's masterpiece. In so doing, Solṭān Valad became one of the first authors in the lands of Rūm to use Turkish as a literary language at all.

In this chapter, I will analyze how the earliest authors of Turkish literature in Rūm, such as Solṭān Valad, 'Āşık Paşa, and Yūnus Emre, appropriated and reinterpreted the literary conventions and canonical authority of *other* authors, and even other literary

languages, in order to communicate with heterogeneous audiences in an easily accessible and sometimes broadly competitive manner: a recognizable, but ultimately different, poetic ‘voice.’¹⁷⁵ In particular, I will demonstrate that the earliest authors of Turkish literature not only appropriated the figure of the gharīb to communicate different messages to these audiences, but furthermore I will suggest that these acts of literary

¹⁷⁵ Until the second half of the fourteenth century, there are few authors of Anatolian Turkish ‘poetry’ we know of. Part of the reason for this, as we will see in the next section, is because Saljūq historiography did not want to ascribe any legitimacy to Turkish as a literary or administrative language. However, during the period which I focus on here, the other major authors of Anatolian Turkish likewise practiced different forms of appropriation and reinterpretation, even loosely ‘translating’ other stories or texts from Arabic and Persian. Therefore, even though the scope of this study is limited to appropriations and reinterpretations of the gharīb, it is important to briefly survey these authors in order to give a sense of how ‘appropriation,’ broadly conceived, was not limited to authors such as Solṭān Valad, ‘Aşık Paşa, and Yūnus Emre, whom I focus on in this chapter, but rather speaks to the greater record of early Turkish literature from this period.

Şeyyād Ḥamza, for instance, composed a Turkish version of the Qur’ānic ‘Yūsof wa Zulaykha’ tale in Masnavī form during the first half of the fourteenth century (see especially Metin Akar, “Şeyyad Hamza hakkında yeni bilgiler,” *Türklük Arasturmaları Dergisi* 2 (1986), 1-14.) Other authors, such as Gülşehri, who also lived in the late 13th and early 14th century, were fluent in multiple literary traditions. While Gülşehri loosely appropriated ‘Attār’s *Manṭeq at-ṭeyr* and composed a new version in Turkish, he also wrote original works in Persian, such as a didactic maṣnavī entitled *Falak-nāma*. The fact that Gülşehri was well-versed in Arabic and Persian prosody is evidenced by his short treatise in Persian on the subject, the only copy of which exists at Istanbul Millet Kütüphanesi, Farsça yazmalar (Istanbul National Library, Persian Writings, no. 517, pp. 46b-61b). Just as importantly, Gülşehri was also associated with Solṭān Valad’s movement in Konya; he praised Solṭān Valad highly and was perhaps even his follower (see Gülşehri/Golshahri, *Mantiku’l-Tayr*, facs. ed. Agāh Sırrı Levend (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1957), 12).

Another early author who composed in Turkish has also been connected, rightly or wrongly, with Rūmī and his followers as well. Aflākī reports several accounts about a certain Turk by the name of Aḥmad Faqīh (in modern Turkish, Ahmet Fakih), a “simple-hearted man” who was so enraptured by the teachings of Rūmī’s family that he “wandered about for many years in the mountains practicing ascetic austerities.” Later, this Aḥmad Faqīh, a man whom Rūmī himself noted “did not follow a model” and therefore was not obedient to any pīr, “threw his books in the fire” and did not return to Konya while Rūmī’s father was still alive (See O’Kane, *Feats of the Knowers*, 30-31; 288-289). However, while scholars have attributed a Turkish poem of eighty couplets in qaşīda form, titled *Çarhname*, to the Aḥmad Faqīh of Aflākī’s reports, subsequent research by T. Gandjei has placed the true author of this work as no earlier than the late 14th century (see T. Gandjei, “Notes on the attribution and date of the ‘Carhnāma,’” in *Studi preottomani e ottoman, Atti del Convegno di Napoli* (Naples: Istituto universitario orientale, 1976), 101-4). Lastly, the other significant author of Turkish poetry during the early configuration of Turkish as a literary language in Rūm is Khwāja Dehhānī (or Hoca Dehhani), who wrote a Shāh-nāma, or Book of Kings, in Persian about the Saljūq dynasty, as well as a number of ghazals and qaşīdas in Turkish (see Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, “Meddāhlar: Türkler’de halk hikâyeciliğine âid bazı maddeler,” *Türkiyât mecmuası* 1 (1925) 1-45).

In each of these cases, the earliest known authors of Turkish literature in Rūm were not only broadly familiar with Persian literature, but sometimes produced literary works in both languages. In this light, it is perhaps not difficult to see why intellectuals have fixated on Yūnus Emre, who was supposedly illiterate and composed many of his devotional hymns [*ilahi*] in the ‘traditional’ Turkish syllabic meter [*hece vezni*] as the classical poet par excellence, reflective of an ‘authentic’ popular Turkish spirit.

appropriation are representative of a much greater process: the configuration and legitimization of Turkish *as* a literary language within the greater Islamic world.

This process of configuring a literary language, such as colloquial Greek or Turkish, was meant to serve in the creation of new Islamic communities who could not understand Persian, which was one of the major ‘Islamic’ languages of literary production in Rūm. In fact, Solṭān Valad not only makes this mission explicit through the title and central conceit of the *Rabāb-nāma*, but he furthermore does so through the figure of the gharīb. Whereas the central conceit of Rūmī’s *Maṣnavī* is the homogenous reed flute, which complains of its separation from the reed-bed (and consequently is a metaphor for the text of the *Maṣnavī*, which describes separation from God), the central figure of Solṭān Valad’s *Rabāb-nāma* is an altogether different musical instrument: the rabāb, or rebec, a bowed and stringed instrument made from many heterogeneous parts, just as the *Rabāb-nāma* was written in many languages. Solṭān Valad makes it clear that he intended to expand upon the central conceit of his father’s *Maṣnavī*, and hence to enlarge the scope of the community who could understand that *Maṣnavī*, in the following passage from the opening of the *Rabāb-nāma*:

His Excellency [Rūmī] said that the reed groans because it has become separated from its reed-bed and from its loved ones; due to this separation it laments in exile [*ghorbat*]. Within the reed there is no more than one lament, but within the rabāb there are [many] laments and separations, because [the rabāb] is composed of gharībs, since each one [part] has been separated from its homeland [*vaṭan*] and own kind, like skin and hair and iron and wood. Due to separation from their own kind, all of these groan and lament. Thus, the moaning and groaning from the reed would be greater within the rabāb. And this which is articulated through the reed

and rabāb and so on — which [themselves] lament in separation — is all metaphor [*mosta‘ār*] and figure [*majāz*].¹⁷⁶

Solṭān Valad’s figure of the rabāb as the unifier of many gharībs, each lamenting in a different voice, ultimately speaks to his ambitions both in Konya and in Rūm as a whole. Besides indicating a musical instrument, rabāb has a secondary meaning of ‘*ahd*’; a covenant, treaty, or oath.¹⁷⁷ Literally the rabāb is that which binds a community together, even if the members of that community are unlike one another. As it turns out, the gharībs in this community are not only dissimilar, but have each come from different “homelands” and are currently cut off from their “own kind.” Despite this, out of the multitude of dissimilar gharībs, the rabāb is able to produce a unifying lament about exile from God, who is our true “homeland” [*vatan*], even though the distinct voices of these gharībs were not the same. This figure of different gharībs coming together to form a new religious covenant arguably stands as a performative metaphor not only for Anatolian society, but also for the book of the *Rabāb-nāma* itself, which was composed using Classical Arabic, Persian, ‘colloquial’ Turkish, and ‘colloquial’ Greek, all of which worked in concert polyvocally towards the creation of a new social and religious community.

Therefore, this chapter also examines how different early authors of Turkish as a literary language in Rūm actively sought to negotiate a competitive place within similar ‘rabābs’ of their own. Like Solṭān Valad, many other authors also sought to construct these new religious communities in part by appropriating a variety of literary and extra-literary conventions, figures, and terms, such as the gharīb (or garīb) in particular.

¹⁷⁶ Solṭān Valad, *Rabāb-nāma*, 2.

Consequently, this chapter demonstrates how some of the foundational authors of Turkish literature in Rūm sought to configure Turkish as a literary language and create new religious communities in tandem through various acts of literary and extra-literary adaptation and appropriation. Ultimately, I will argue that these authors employed similar practices of appropriation in order to be competitive within a translocal Islamic literary space, as well as easily accessible and comprehensible to more local Turkish audiences.

Finally, in so doing, I will avoid the twin historiographic pitfalls of assuming that these authors were either reductively copying Arabic and Persian literary conventions, or that they were somehow isolated and detached from these other literary cultures. Instead, I will argue that appropriating literary forms and figures from other literary languages also entailed a reinterpretation of what those forms and figures could signify, and therefore represents a form of dynamic engagement with other peoples and languages. As I argued in the previous chapter, because the figure of the *gharīb* was the product of such interaction between multiple peoples, languages, and literatures, I argue in this chapter that the *gharīb* can likewise help us conceptualize cross-cultural and cross-linguistic ‘exchange’ in the case of an emerging Turkish literature in Rūm.

¹⁷⁷ See ‘Alī Akbar Dehkhodā, *Loghāt-Nāma*, ed. Moḥammad Mo‘īn and Ja‘far Shahīdī, vol. 7 (Tehran: Mo‘assasa-‘e Enteshārāt va Chāp-e Dāneshgāh-e Tehrān, 1994), 10,456.



Fig. 6: Community activity in Konya: Rūmī's followers read, play musical instruments, and participate in a samā' during the leadership of his first successor, Ḥosām al-Dīn Chalabī. From an abridged translation of Aflākī into Turkish, c. 1590. The Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.466, fol. 159r.

2. Cross-cultural Appropriation as a Mechanism for Configuring Language as Literary

Before we can examine how the early authors of Anatolian Turkish appropriated and reinterpreted literary conventions from classical Arabic and Persian, of which the figure of the *gharīb* is but one dimension, first some background information is necessary about the adaptation of literary conventions across these languages in general. Therefore, in this section, I will provide a brief outline of the initial emergence of Turkish literature vis-a-vis the Islamic literary world. In particular, I will focus on the adaptation of Arabic and Persian poetics and prosody in literary Turkish, which scholars often characterized as ‘reductive’ of Arabic and Persian literary forms, or, conversely, as entirely independent of those forms. While these debates may seem esoteric to the non-specialist, they matter here insofar as they have directly contributed to how scholars define what was “Turkish” about early Turkish literature at all. Therefore, in this section, I begin to establish the groundwork for understanding the emergence of literary Turkish in Rūm not as a reductive or isolated process, but rather one which was dynamically attuned to the greater conventions of the Islamic literary world. To this end, I will also establish some basic parameters for how we might understand the cross-lingual exchange of literary conventions, *topoi*, and *tropes*, in more lateral terms.

In the particular case of Rūm, the moment when the Turkish language supposedly burst upon the literary scene is tinged with a mixture of nationalism and irony. As Sara Nur Yildiz has observed, “no event in Karamanid history, and in fact, all of thirteenth-century Anatolian history, has been more celebrated and imbued with nationalist content

and symbolism than the famous farman, or decree, supposedly pronounced by Mehmed Bey, the son of Karaman, following his entrance into Konya and seizure of the Saljūq sultanate and ruling apparatus during the 1276 rebellion.”¹⁷⁸ This farman, which has been immortalized today with an epigraph in Turkish and bust of Mehmed Bey in Karaman [Qaramān], notoriously declared: “From today onwards no language other than Turkish is to be used in the imperial council, the inner and outer courts, the assembly, and the public square.”¹⁷⁹ Were Mehmed Bey’s rebellion to have lasted — it was quashed the following year — the farman could have represented a seismic shift in Anatolian letters, with Persian and Arabic being eclipsed by Turkish as an administrative and literary language in Rūm. Certainly, this view has been adopted by contemporary scholars on pre-modern Rūm who rely on an overtly nationalist framework, such as Nejat Kaymaz, who characterized Mehmed Bey’s farman as an invitation to all Turkmen to throw off the political and cultural hegemonies of foreign occupiers.¹⁸⁰ In nationalist terms, it should have been a moment of ‘awakening’ when the Turkish people would come to terms with their own inherent Turkish identities, their own literatures and cultures.

And yet, the farman was more complicated than that. As Yildiz has noted, the only source we have of the farman isn’t even in Turkish — if the farman existed at all. Ebn Bībī, the sole contemporary Saljūq historian, wrote about the Karamanid rebellion and quoted the farman in *Persian*, which has only been translated into modern Turkish in more recent times. Yildiz provocatively asks “what a better way to delegitimize Karamanid rule in Konya than to portray Mehmed Bey as an illiterate Turk ignorant of

¹⁷⁸ Sara Nur Yildiz, "Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Saljūq Anatolia: The Politics of Conquest and History Writing, 1243-1282" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2006), 45.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

Persian and therefore incapable of conducting state affairs in that language, hence the promulgation of the Turkish language farman?”¹⁸¹ If Yildiz’s assertion is correct, Turkish literature began to emerge in Rūm only a few decades after the notion of ‘courtly’ or ‘literary’ Turkish was depicted by Ebn Bībī as a paradox in terms.

However, if Turkish was disparaged to such a degree that its supposed use in an official capacity could undermine claims to sovereignty, why did figures such as Solṭān Valad, ‘Āşīk Paşa, Gülşehrī, Yūnus Emre and others begin to write in Turkish only a few decades later? To understand how these authors configured the gharīb out of the prosody and poetics of Arabic and Persian literature(s), we first need to understand how they positioned Turkish as a literary medium within and against preexisting notions of what being ‘literary’ means. In essence, we need to address not just the attitude Ebn Bībī had about literary Turkish during this moment in time, but rather how different courtly figures had already attempted to configure Turkish as a literary language through various acts of appropriation long before Mehmed Bey’s infamous farman.

This requires a very large step backwards from the Anatolian literary landscape. Historiographies of Turkish literature tend to begin in the 11th century, after the coming of Islam,¹⁸² during the reign of the three ethnically Turkish dynasties which spanned the

¹⁸⁰ Nejat Kaymaz, *Pervâne Mu‘īnüd-Dīn Süleyman* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1970), 173.

¹⁸¹ Yildiz, “Mongol Rule,” 49.

¹⁸² Turkish literary historiographies traditionally begin with a wide survey of both eastern and western Turkish literature. Such studies tend to assume a bifurcated periodization scheme along the fault line of pre and post-Islam, or a quadripartite scheme of pre and post-Islam in the premodern period, and a modern era informed by Western influence in the 19th century and the emergence of a national literary identity in the 20th. These slices of time are further divided by geography, with Khvarazmian Turkic and Chaghatay Turkic literature in the east, and Qipchak and Oghuz Turkic literature in the west. Of all these, Oghuz Turkish, the forerunner to Ottoman Turkish, is depicted as the latecomer on the scene, as it did not emerge as a written language until the late 13th and early 14th centuries, whereas literary Turkish had a genesis amongst the Turkic speaking peoples of Central Asia two centuries earlier. For example, see: Fahir Iz, “Turkish Literature,” in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Holt, P. M., Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 682-94; and also Çiğdem Balım

Islamic world: the Qarakhanids, the Ghaznavids, and the Saljūqs.¹⁸³ It was during this period when two monumental works, the *Kutadgu Bilig* [*Wisdom of Royal Glory*] by Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājeb and the *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* [*Compendium of Turkish Dialects*] by Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī, ushered in the dawn of post-Islamic Turkish letters.¹⁸⁴ Most significantly for our purposes, just as Solṭān Valad and Rūmī both wrote in the ‘meter and mode’ of other authoritative literary works, which allowed them both to reinterpret those works while simultaneously co-opting their authority, the first authors of literary Turkish likewise sought to encode their works in Arabic and Persian meters.

In particular, the *Kutadgu Bilig* and *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* are important for the present study because they pose two critical problems which have relevance not only for Rūm, but also for the concepts of ‘appropriation’ and ‘exchange’ in literary and cultural studies in general. The first problem addresses how we should categorize appropriation from another literary language, and the second problem concerns to what extent we can say these literary works are ‘Turkish’ if they rely on appropriating the conventions of other literary languages. As we will see, the answers to those questions have high stakes for how scholars have conceptualized the origin of Turkish literature itself.

Here, I will first address how the *Kutadgu Bilig* raises these questions for contemporary scholarship, and in so doing, I will suggest an alternative way of framing this discussion beyond the authentic ‘Turkish’ and influenced ‘non-Turkish’ dichotomy. Second, I will examine how the *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, a compendium of Turkish

Harding, "Turkish Literature," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Robert Irwin, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 424-33.

¹⁸³ As Robert Dankoff notes, while the Ghaznavids and Saljūqs patronized Iranian culture, the Qarakhanids patronized Turkish culture as well. See Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājeb, *Wisdom of Royal Glory: A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes*, trans. Robert Dankoff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 2.

¹⁸⁴ With the exception of the eighth century Orkhun inscriptions in present-day Mongolia, the earliest records of pre-Islamic Turkish literature exist today only in Chinese translation.

dialects and culture, can help us to understand why the early authors of literary Turkish would have wanted to adopt the literary conventions of languages like Classical Arabic or Persian, which in turn will help to illuminate why authors in Rūm similarly appropriated a variety of other literary conventions in order to address their heterogeneous audiences in competitive ways. Only out of the macro-history of Turkish letters can we begin tracing the micro-history of the *gharīb*'s entrance into Anatolian Turkish literature, as we will see in the subsequent three sections of this chapter.

To begin, the *Kutadgu Bilig* is a Turkish mirror-for-princes, a form of advice literature for sovereigns, written for the ruler of Kashghar in the Qarakhanid empire. However, the *Kutadgu Bilig* had a more ambitious intention than only bestowing knowledge of proper kingship. As Robert Dankoff notes, Yūsof Khāṣṣ Ḥājeb desired “to show that the Turkish traditions of royalty and wisdom were comparable or superior to their Arab and Iranian counterparts, and were equally compatible with Islam.”¹⁸⁵ Among other things, Yūsof fulfilled this intention by citing a wide variety of Turkish princes as well as by quoting from anonymous Turkish poets—in effect, inscribing them as literary.¹⁸⁶ He also wrote the *Kutadgu Bilig* in the Turkish language, which he called “a wild mustang” who had to be grasped gently and drawn near.¹⁸⁷ In so doing, Yūsof “won her heart” and began to follow in her tracks.¹⁸⁸

Arguably, Yūsof tamed the “wild mustang” of literary Turkish in part by composing in the *motaqāreb* [in modern Turkish, *mütekarib*] meter, which, as François de Blois among many others have noted, is the primary meter used in Persian poems of

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 1.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 1.

¹⁸⁷ Yūsof further notes, “In Arabic and in Persian there are many books, but in our tongue this is the sum of intellect.” Ibid., 253; 261.

“legendary or heroic content.”¹⁸⁹ By encoding the *Kutadgu Bilig* in the *motaqāreb* meter, Yūsuf also became the first author to write Turkish in ‘*arūz*,¹⁹⁰ defined by L. P. Elwell-Sutton as “the term applied to the metrical system used by the Arab poets since pre-Islamic times, and more specifically to the method of scanning and classifying these meters.”¹⁹¹ This act essentially inaugurated Turkish as a literary language according to preexisting Arabo-Persian aesthetic and metrical assumptions on what ‘literature’ is.

However, what should have been a crowning achievement in Turkish letters — the appropriation and adaptation of Arabo-Persian ‘*arūz* in a nascent literary language — has been considered in somewhat static, if not reductive, terms. For instance, in the case of the *Kutadgu Bilig*, scholars have largely framed the debate on Yūsuf’s employment of the *motaqāreb* meter in terms of whether his use of this Persian meter was correct or incorrect. Although there have been breakthroughs in the understanding of early Turkish *aruz* in the last forty years — most notably when Talat Tekin proved that our previous notion of long and short Turkish vowels was flawed, and consequently the *Kutadgu Bilig* actually did use the *motaqāreb* meter correctly¹⁹² — the basic cornerstones of this

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 253.

¹⁸⁹ Today, such content is often anachronistically classified under the rubric of epic or historical poetry, as modern critics have translated ‘epic’ as *hamāsa-sarā’ī*, which loosely means “heroic poetry.” Ferdowsī’s *Shāh-nāma*, which describes the legendary origins of Iran up to the coming of Islam, was written in the *motaqāreb* meter, as were many significant *Eskendar-nāmas*, which depict the life of Alexander the Great. Despite the modern desire to create taxonomies of metrical forms according to the genres they informed, the boundaries of those genres were less clearly defined in the premodern period. ‘*Aṭṭār* and Rūmī both favored the *motaqāreb* meter in their homiletic and didactic poetry, for instance. Poetry in the *motaqāreb* meter could serve religions, ‘mythic,’ narrative, didactic, and even historical modes of writing, sometimes all within a single text. See François de Blois, “Epics,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 2011, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/epics>.

¹⁹⁰ Or, in the Modern Turkish spelling, ‘*aruz*.’

¹⁹¹ L. P. Elwell-Sutton, “‘*Arūz*,” in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 2011, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/aruz-the-metrical-system>.

¹⁹² See Talat Tekin, “Determination of Middle-Turkic Long Vowels through ‘*arūd*,” *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 20 (1967): 151-70.

discussion have remained unchanged.¹⁹³ Consequently, while our understanding of a single text has grown (we now know that the *Kutadgu Bilig* used ‘arūz accurately), scholars generally depict the corpus of early Turkish literature as imperfectly or passively adopting Arabo-Persian prosody. For instance, the enormously influential scholar Mehmet Fuat Köprülü has characterized the Turkish adoption of ‘arūz in terms of ‘taklid,’ or mere imitation, of Arabic and Persian culture by the Turkish people.¹⁹⁴ In contradistinction, what is frequently posited as ‘authentically’ Turkish is that which taps into oral and folk cultures.¹⁹⁵

While this may not seem especially significant to the non-specialist, these discussions have not only shaped how scholars conceptualize the origins of ‘Islamic’ Turkish literature, but even what is “Turkish” about Turkish literature at all. Take the implications of Talât Sait Halman’s *A Millenium of Turkish Literature*, which partly reflects the desire to classify prosody according to a fixed (i.e., native or foreign) origin, rather than an ongoing negotiation between discrete texts:

¹⁹³ That is, scholars have largely framed this discussion in terms of 'native' and 'foreign' literary forms.

¹⁹⁴ Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, "Aruz.," in *İslam Alemi Tarih, Coğrafya, Etnografya ve Biyografya Lugati*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1950), 625-653. As Paul Losensky notes, the concept of *taqlid* (or taklid in modern Turkish) in Persian bears all of the negative connotations of “influence” in the English language, as *taklid* also means “to put a rope around an animal’s neck” or “adorning someone with a necklace,” implying that weaker author passively receives something from the dominant author. See Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1998), 108.

¹⁹⁵ In the case of Anatolia, Köprülü in fact takes this binary between Persian elite culture and traditional, unassuming Turkish culture to great lengths. For example, he writes about this period thusly in his important *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*: "Beneath a veneer apparently borrowed from Arabic and Persian culture, Turkish life in Anatolia in the Saljūq period was perhaps a bit primitive, but it was completely national, genuine, and widespread." Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, trans. Gary Leiser and Robert Dankoff (London: Routledge, 2006), 210. It was the wandering Turkish ozans, or minstrels, who kept the popular Turkish oral tradition alive for centuries during this period in order to "satisfy the aesthetic needs of the people." Ibid., 210. This attitude can best be summed up by his argument that "in this period, Anatolia was so permeated with an atmosphere of heroism that even the Saljūq rulers who were under the *demoralizing influence of Persian culture* could not give up their attachment to Oghuz customary law, and the old warlike traditions in their own palaces." (The emphasis here is my own). Ibid., 211.

The writing of the *Kutadgu Bilig* by Yusuf Has Hacib coincided almost exactly with that of the *Divanü Lügati't Türk*. Yet these two works could not be more disparate in orientation: The *Divan*, although written mostly in Arabic, is quintessentially “Turkish,” whereas the *Kutadgu Bilig* — a monumental philosophical treatise (approximately 6,500 couplets) on government, justice, and ethics—reflects the author’s assimilation of Islamic concepts, of Arabic and Persian culture, including its orthography, vocabulary, and prosody.¹⁹⁶

From this basic paradigm, Halman goes on to extrapolate that “this disparity was to become the gulf that divided Turkish literature well into the twentieth century—the gulf, namely, between *poesia d’arte* and *poesia popolare* [...] The first embodies elite, learned, ornate, refined literature; the second represents spontaneous, indigenous, down-to-earth, unassuming oral literature.”¹⁹⁷ However, while it is certainly true that the *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* is an indispensable source for understanding the folk and oral cultures of different Turkic tribes in a way that the *Kutadgu Bilig* is decidedly not, the two works *both* utilized preexisting Arabic and Persian literary models in a similar manner. Both employed the *motaqāreb* meter, for instance, and both were structurally modeled off of preexisting literary genres, such as Persian mirror-for-princes literature in the case of the *Kutadgu Bilig*, and Arabic lexicons in the case of the *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*. Ironically, the quintessentially ‘Turkish’ *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, written largely in Arabic, was composed for the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadī (1075-1094) so that Abbasid court could understand the customs and language of their Saljūq Turkic overlords, as Robert Dankoff

¹⁹⁶ Talāt Sait Halman, *A Millennium of Turkish Literature: A Concise History*, ed. Jayne L. Warner (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 7-8.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

notes.¹⁹⁸ Its intended audience perhaps was not even ‘Turkish’ as in the case of the *Kutadgu Bilig*.

Consequently, in the *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, what is ‘authentically’ Turkish is ultimately contextualized by the Arabic language, within the model of Arabic lexicons, and through Arabic literary conventions such as the *motaqāreb* meter. I would therefore posit that the “gulf” between ‘high’ and ‘low’ Turkic literature, as well as between ‘Arabic,’ ‘Persian,’ and ‘Turkish’ literary conventions, is not always as impassible as it initially appears. On a larger scale in literary studies, these dichotomies speak to the Western legacy of categorizing literature in terms of deliberate, ‘civilized’ prose on one hand and spontaneous, rhapsodic lyric on the other, a typological divide which essentially defined the modern assumption that ‘drama’ and the ‘epic’ are rhetorical whereas the lyric is unmediated by artificially ‘literary’ concerns.¹⁹⁹ In more nationalist terms, the spoken ‘lyric’ represents the unadulterated spirit of the people, spontaneous and oral, unfiltered through the artifice of literary convention in any tongue. As we will later see, just as in the case of the *Kutadgu Bilig* and *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, ‘Āşık Paşa and Yūnus Emre have also been sorted into either side of this divide; with ‘Āşık Paşa falling into

¹⁹⁸ Robert Dankoff, "Kāşgarī on the Beliefs and Superstitions of the Turks," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 95, no. 1 (1975): 68.

¹⁹⁹ This line of thinking can be traced back to the 19th century English philosopher John Stuart Mill, who famously defined poetry as “overheard,” or as “feeling confessing itself to itself.” (See John Stuart Mill, *Dissertations and Discussions: Political, Philosophical, and Historical*. Vol. 1 (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1874), 97.) Mill was elaborating upon the even older conceptualization of poetry by the influential 18th century orientalist, Sir William Jones, who attempted to debunk an oft-repeated maxim of Aristotle that the arts are mimetic. Instead, Jones argued that true art is the expression (not representation) of the passions, rather than being a mere description of natural objects—an idea which, according to M. H. Abrams, culminated in the theories of Mill some sixty years later. This was to become one of the cornerstones upon which nationalist and orientalist understandings of oral literature as expressive of the ‘spirit’ of the nation was founded. See M. H. Abrams, "The Lyric as Poetic Norm," in *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Virginia Walker Jackson and Yopie Prins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 143.

relative obscurity for writing in a derivative “Persian” style, whereas Yūnus Emre is celebrated as voicing the unmediated spirit of the people.

In contradistinction, I would suggest that the appropriation of preexisting literary conventions, such as prosody, in another literary language is not as straightforward, coincidental, or reductive as it might initially appear: even within the supposed Persian adoption of Arabic prosody, there is considerable debate as to what this ‘appropriation’ really means. Part of the confusion over the meaning of ‘appropriation’ stems from the fact that while the *‘arūz* system of Arabic prosody was codified by Khalīl b. Aḥmad Farhūdī in the 8th century, Farhūdī based his system on the meters and categories of Arabic poetry that had been developing over the previous two hundred years. According to Elwell-Sutton, this terminology used to identify meters in Arabic prosody has been perfunctorily copied ever since, “to such a degree that the meaning of it was forgotten, and it could be blindly applied to meters of a very different type (such as Persian) for which it was not devised or suited.”²⁰⁰ Elwell-Sutton explains the problem:

The same terminology was subsequently applied to the meters used in classical and classical-style Persian poetry, even though it is quite clear that these are quite different in both origin and structure. This has led to serious confusion among prosodists, both ancient and modern, as to the true source and nature of the Persian meters, the most obvious error being the assumption that they were copied from Arabic. This misconception arises solely from the use of the Arabic terminology to describe the Persian meters, but is no sounder evidence for an Arabic origin than is, say, the use of Greek terminology proof of a Greek origin for the meters of English verse.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Elwell-Sutton, “‘Arūz,’” <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/aruz-the-metrical-system>.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

A growing number of scholars in the last century, such as Emile Benveniste, Gustav E. von Grunebaum, Bo Utas, and Gilbert Lazard, have likewise adopted the similar position that, in the words of Utas, “the origin of many of the New Persian meters must be sought in earlier Iranian rhythmic structures that were formally adapted to a quantitative structure”²⁰² rather than located in the historical development of Arabic prosody.²⁰³ Furthermore, as Elwell-Sutton and Lazard have observed, while prosody is by definition artifice, it is nevertheless conditioned by “the phonological properties of language,” and consequently we can observe that the meters most frequently used in Persian are “rare or nonexistent” in Arabic.²⁰⁴ Grunebaum takes this argument one step further, positing that the *motaqāreb* meter was actually adapted in Arabic based on earlier *Pahlawī* meters, and then re-written to meet the needs of the Arabic language.²⁰⁵

As we have seen in the case of Rūmī writing in the meter of ‘Aṭṭār, prosody and poetics serve as hinges which connect disparate bodies of literature across space and time, but those hinges sometimes swing both ways. When Rūmī wrote in the ‘meter’ and ‘style’ of ‘Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī, we remember that he did so in part to place his work within a new literary genealogy — a genealogy encoded within the very metrical structure of the

²⁰² Bo Utas, "On the Composition of the Ayyātkār i Zarērān," in *Acta Iranica* 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 399-418.

²⁰³ E. J. W. Gibb arrived at a similar position almost a century ago regarding the Turkish adoption of Persian prosody: “Metres and verse-forms, somewhat vague and rough-hewn it is true, but very similar in lilt and shape to certain Persian varieties, were in existence among the Turks as products of genuine home-growth. Consequently when the question arose of elaborating a vehicle for literary poetry, it was not altogether met by a mere wholesale borrowing from outside, but to a certain extent by the working up of already existing materials to more perfect conformity with the accepted standard. In this way a good many points in the technique of Turkish verse, though now identical with their counterparts in the Persian system, are in their origin not, as superficially appears, loans from that system, but genuine native elements that have been artificially brought into complete conformity with it.” Elias John Wilkinson Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. 1 (London: Luzac & co., 1900), 12.

²⁰⁴ Gilbert Lazard, "Prosody i. Middle Persian," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 2006, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/poetry-iv-poetics-of-middle-persian>.

²⁰⁵ Gustav E. von Grunebaum, *Kritik und Dichtkunst: Studien zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1955), 18.

Maṣnavī — but also in part so that his disciples would understand the higher meanings of ‘Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī through Rūmī’s own teachings. For this reason, examining how and, more importantly, *why* different authors adopted formal poetic structures, such as the prosody of other literary languages, might provide an alternative way of conceptualizing the relationships between literary systems beyond a uni-directional or merely reductive framework of exchange, where one of the actors either ‘gets it right’ or doesn’t.

To put it slightly differently, rather than getting at the elusive ‘origins’ of prosody in either language, even the superficial Persian adoption of Arabic prosody²⁰⁶ could rather be understood as a purposeful gesture to connect disparate literary worlds within the realm of Islam, to create and negotiate new literary hierarchies and ways of mediating meaning and authority through particular textual linkings. Along similar lines, it would be more fruitful to understand the appropriation and reinterpretation of Arabic and Persianate poetics in Turkish literature as a complex negotiation of literary authority between multiple discussants, which more closely resembles the stances these authors themselves took in entering into an ‘Islamic’ literary milieu, than as a reductive form of mimicry, or *taklid*. This approach would be useful in understanding how early adopters of Turkish as a literary language encoded their own poetry in an analogous — yet not entirely equivalent — system of *aruz*.

The origins of Turkish literature after the coming of Islam, represented by the *Kutadgu Bilig* and *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, consequently might be considered in the light that these works were not ‘detached’ from the greater Islamic world or merely influenced by Arabic and Persian letters, but rather were competitively attempting to be part and parcel of a greater literary space. In fact, the Qarakhanid author of the *Dīwān Lughāt al-*

Turk, Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī, even cited an apocryphal ḥadīth to make this point clear. As many have noted, he claimed that the Prophet commanded all “to learn the language of the Turks, for their rule shall be long,” thus lending his endeavor both divine and temporal authority. Even more explicitly, the introduction to the *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* draws parallels between the Arabic language and various Turkish dialects, likening both to evenly-matched horses in a race,²⁰⁷ much as Yūsof noted he had to tame the “wild mustang” of literary Turkish. As I suggested, Yūsof partly ‘tamed’ the wild mustang of Turkish by adapting an ‘Arabo-Persian’ meter for his own purposes, and al-Kāshgharī likewise did the same.²⁰⁸

Why would Kāshgharī do this?²⁰⁹ If preexisting literary languages already existed on both local and translocal levels, what end would developing Turkish as a literary language serve? Aside from the fact that the work was presented to an Arabic-speaking audience, the introduction’s metaphor for literary production in the Turkish language — a Turkish racehorse galloping neck-and-neck beside the stallion of Arabic letters — provides another possible suggestion. It boils down to the meaning of literary competitiveness. In Latin, compete or “competere” comes from ‘com,’ or together, and ‘petere,’ to strive or seek. The word means not only to strive together, but also in a

²⁰⁶ Or conversely, if Grunebaum is correct, the partial Arabic adoption of Persian prosody.

²⁰⁷ Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī, *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects*, trans. Robert Dankoff, Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

²⁰⁸ Scholars such as Gerhard Doerfer and I. V. Stebleva have rightly observed that Kāshgharī did not always employ Arabic prosody correctly: Kāshgharī was “relying on the number of syllables and sometimes resorting to graphic devices (e.g., omitting letters marking long vowels) in order to simulate a perfect *arūz*.” (See Gerhard Doerfer, “Chaghatay Language and Literature,” *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 2011, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/chaghatay-language-and-literature>. What matters for our purposes, though, are the reasons why Kāshgharī felt compelled to utilize an ‘Arabic’ *arūz* in the first place.

²⁰⁹ It should be emphasized that Kāshgharī wrote his compendium shortly after Alp Arslān had defeated the Byzantines in the 1071 battle of Malāzgerd (Manzikert, or in Armenian, Manazkert), marking a turning point in the political and demographic expansion of the Turkish peoples westward. In other words, at a moment when various ethnically Turkic dynasties were ascending to a powerful socio-political

broader sense to be *qualified* to enter into the same arena. In *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*'s metaphor, a 'race' between horses only makes sense when we agree that both horses and audiences are able to recognize a similar set of rules in play. In a real way, Kāshgharī had to make the case that the literary language of Turkish not only transcended any individual Turkish dialect, but also that it was fit to compete with Arabic as a literary vehicle for conveying thought.²¹⁰

In juxtaposition, we began this section by examining the supposed farman of Mehmed Bey in Konya, which attempted to usurp Persian in Rūm and resulted in spectacular failure. As we have seen, being in a position of political power (however brief) does not necessarily legitimize a literary language for a broader audience. However, unlike Mehmed Bey, the earliest authors of literary Turkish in Rūm arguably were highly sensitive to the need of making this language *competitive* within a greater 'Islamic' literary space, which they entered into in different ways, sometimes cooperatively. As we will see in the following sections, instead of usurping the preexisting literary languages in the region, foundational authors such as Solṭān Valad, 'Āṣiḳ Paşa, and Yūnus Emre appropriated the literary forms and figures of 'others,' which they reinterpreted to communicate with their audience in a way that was translocally and translingually competitive, but still easily accessible and even 'popular.'

Therefore, having established this general background, which seeks to complicate static understandings of appropriation across literary languages by moving away from

position, Mahmud Kāshgharī still felt compelled to utilize a metrical system beyond the syllabic meter of 'traditional' Turkish letters.

²¹⁰ To a certain degree, we might liken his compendium to Dante Alighieri's own famous defense of the 'vernacular,' which he purposely wrote in Latin, the language of literary authority in his own interpretive community, as Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī likewise wrote parts of the *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* in Arabic.

absolute binaries such ‘low culture/high culture,’ ‘native/foreign,’ ‘indigenous/exogenous,’ and even to a certain extent, any absolute dividing lines between ‘Turkish,’ ‘Arabic,’ and ‘Persian’ poetics, we can now begin to examine how other authors likewise pursued similar practices of literary appropriation in Rūm. In the next section, I will similarly argue that it is more productive to investigate how these authors negotiated and constructed their own authority, literary languages, and communities through various acts of appropriation than it is to artificially cast these authors as either reductive of Arabic and Persian culture, or conversely, as isolated and detached from it.²¹¹

Along those same lines, through the examples of Solṭān Valad, Yūnus Emre, and ‘Āşık Paşa, I will suggest that the adaptation and reinterpretation of Turkish ‘garībs’ likewise cannot be reduced to a simple matter of mere imitation [*taklid*] or mimicry, but rather implicates an ongoing negotiation for literary and spiritual authority within the greater Islamic world. The gharīb emerges as an important figure in this regard, as Solṭān Valad and ‘Āşık Paşa both mobilized it, in part, to explain or to legitimize Turkish as a literary language. At the same time, while Yūnus Emre paradoxically has been characterized both as a representative of premodern humanism and a proto-national forerunner of authentic Turkish literature, I will demonstrate how he was also engaged in similar acts of semiotic and literary appropriation, such as by reinterpreting figures like the gharīb, which he used to articulate his own spiritual authority. Thereby, I will argue

²¹¹ In other words, we need not understand authors like Solṭān Valad, Yūnus Emre, and ‘Āşık Paşa during this period across the artificially rigid binaries of Turkish-Persian, folk-elite, mystical-courtly, or even textual-oral. Instead, early Oghuz Turkish texts could be better illuminated in the intersection between different literary conventions and communal covenants; the ways in which ‘authors’ intentionally enter into other discursive bodies, and in so doing, connect not only texts within new interpretive frames, but labor to bridge interpretive communities within a particular social and spiritual orientation as well. From there, we

for a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which these Anatolian literary cultures were ‘interconnected,’ not in an abstract, utopian sense, but through various acts of appropriation and reinterpretation, some of them cooperative, some of them of a more oppositional nature.

3. Forming Community through the Configuration of New Literary Languages

In this section, I will build upon my previous argument that we ought to understand the adoption of ‘Arabic’ and ‘Persian’ poetics, such as prosody, *topoi*, aesthetics, and formal literary conventions, not as a reductive act of mimicry, but as a more dynamic attempt to legitimize Turkish as a competitive literary language and configure a community in tandem. In particular, this section will examine the first of three case studies: how Solṭān Valad, one of the earliest known authors to compose in Oghuz Turkish through Arabic and Persian prosody, attempted to shape his own audience by communicating with them in a manner they could understand, while at the same time, by introducing conventions from other literary languages into the Turkish-speaking community.

However, as we have seen in the previous section, the act of appropriating other literary forms and figures is not as culturally superposed or reductive as it initially appears. Similarly, while Solṭān Valad encoded the Turkish and Greek sections of the *Rabāb-nāma* to conform with preexisting Persian conventions of what a didactic *maṣnavī* should look like, I will suggest that he also wove Turkish and Greek concepts and easily

can more accurately approach the migration of the ‘gharīb’ from Rūmī to Yūnus Emre, ‘Āşık Paşa, and other early authors of Turkish in Anatolia.

comprehensible examples within an over-arching interpretive framework, informed by multiple appropriations of different sources. In other words, his appropriations and reinterpretations came not just from Arabic and Persian poetics, but also from the Greek and Turkish communities of Konya themselves, which he wove together in the ‘meter and mode’ of his father’s luminous *Maṣnavī*.

In fact, as I noted at the beginning of this chapter, this is not only how Solṭān Valad conceptualized his own ambitious undertaking, but also how he explained and justified it to his Persian speaking audience. As we have seen, the *rabāb*, which was both a popular musical instrument and a symbol of a new religious covenant, brought together different *gharībs* within a new community. Equally importantly, these *gharībs* were arguably a symbol for the languages of the multilingual text of the *Rabāb-nāma* itself. Just as ethnically different ‘*gharībs*’ were united in the covenant established by Rūmī, we can say that the linguistically diverse sections of the *Rabāb-nāma* were quite literally united in the ‘meter and mode’ of Rūmī’s *Maṣnavī*. Solṭān Valad plays with this very idea himself, noting explicitly that the *rabāb*, which voices the lament of dissimilar *gharībs*, is ultimately a metaphor for epistemic production in language.²¹²

In that sense, by gathering together the different ‘*gharībs*’ who voiced those languages, the *Rabāb-nāma* reconsidered who could participate within the literary and

²¹² As Solṭān Valad provocatively states, “and this which is articulated through the reed and *rabāb* and so on — which [themselves] lament in separation — is all metaphor [*mosta’ār*] and figure [*majāz*]. In reality, their groaning and moaning is for the reason that since antiquity they have resided in the knowledge of God [*ḥaqq*]. Because it happened that they became separated and parted from this, they lament that from the higher meaning of reunion with the Creator, ‘we have passed into the artifice of separation.’ Now they request reunion and concord with the former, and this too is a metaphor [*esta’āra*].” (see Solṭān Valad, *Rabāb-nāma*, 2). Consequently, the lament of these *gharībs*—the music of the *rabāb*—is akin to human discourse and therefore serves as a figure [*majāz*] for the epistemic production of the text, which treats the problem of ‘separation’ from God in a sophisticated theological manner. Yet, as Solṭān Valad is all too aware, these discourses and the epistemes they configure are only another layer of ‘artifice’: they

epistemic production both within Konya and beyond. It also served as a reconsideration of what languages could be used to accomplish the labor of creating a new religious covenant, rooted in the authority of Rūmī, but no longer limited to Arabic and Persian. Most likely, aspects of this project were controversial, as only fifteen years earlier Mehmed Bey had (reportedly) tried to uproot Persian as the literary and administrative language of the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm. Therefore, it's not surprising that Solṭān Valad uses the unifying figure of the rabāb as a way of articulating to his Persian-speaking audience that these dissimilar 'gharībs' could both work differentially and in concert with one another, harmonizing even the most discordant of voices. Unlike the singular reed of the *Masnavī*, which was composed of one homogenous part, by definition this new religious rabāb had to be multilingual and multiethnic to exist at all: a new socio-religious covenant populated by dissimilar 'gharībs.'

The efficacy of this argument depended on how well the different 'parts' of the *Rabāb-nāma* really could be contextualized by (what Solṭān Valad was helping to construct as) Rūmī's own unimpeachable authority. This required Solṭān Valad to pursue a variety of literary and extra-literary appropriations to frame the Turkish and Greek sections of the book as 'competitive' in a geographic region where Persian and Arabic were the dominant literary languages of Islam. The first appropriation, as already noted, was of course the instrument of the rabāb, which was used to accompany the earliest recitations of the *Masnavī*.²¹³ Solṭān Valad is careful to associate this instrument directly

analogically describe, but cannot fully access, true knowledge of union with God. The medium of the text and even language itself is ultimately figural in nature.

²¹³ The choice of the rebec to serve this function was neither coincidental nor accidental, as we have already seen that Rūmī described the people of Rum as "musicians" who "had a penchant for [musical] expression," and hence he tried to communicate his teachings through a medium which would find resonance with his audience (see Aflākī, *Manāqeb al- 'ārefīn*, vol. 1, 207-208). The famous opening hemstich of the *Masnavī*, "Listen to the reed [*nay*] as it makes grievance," reflects this aural and even

with Rūmī, noting that “the rabāb is particular and connected to his Excellency Mowlānā,” and from the rabāb, “this maṣnavī has commenced and its foundation has been established.” It is likely that the instrument of the rabāb also accompanied oral recitations of the *Rabāb-nāma*, further linking the authority of the *Maṣnavī* with Solṭān Valad’s own literary production.

In addition, as previously noted, Solṭān Valad encoded the Turkish and Greek sections of his *Rabāb-nāma* in the meter of the *Maṣnavī*, using the system of ‘arūz instead of the ‘traditional’ Turkish syllabic meter,²¹⁴ which not only framed those languages according to pre-established Arabo-Persian notions of what a literary text looks like, but also what one *sounds* like.²¹⁵ Even in languages with different

musical dimension of the work, as “sources suggest that the first Mevlevi ensembles were comprised of the nay (a vertical seven-holed reed flute) and the kudum (a small, metal, double kettledrum), with the later addition of the tunbur, rabāb, and halile (cymbals)” (see Fass, Sunni M. “Music.” *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Josef W. Meri and Jere L. Bacharach, vol. 2 (New York: Routledge, 2006), 534). From the very first line of the *Maṣnavī*, then, readers and listeners were encouraged to think analogically not only about the mystical content of ‘higher meanings,’ but about their very mode of transmission.

²¹⁴ According to Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, Solṭān Valad was far from the first author to attempt to encode Turkish poetry in aruz. As Köprülü notes: “Although there was no widespread use of Turkish as a written language at that time, it is almost certain that Şūfī poems in ‘arūḍ, as well as legends and stories, had been written in Turkish in Rūm even before Sulṭān Walad. But Sulṭān Walad, thanks to his influence as a great Şūfī and spiritual teacher, succeeded in establishing ‘arūḍ meters and mathnawī form as the absolute rule for Şūfī-moralistic didactic works. At the same time, however, despite the influence of Sulṭān Walad and the importance of the Persian ‘arūḍ system, Şūfī poetry written in the syllabic meter, which began with Aḥmad Yasawī and continued with popular Şūfīs like Shayyād Ḥamza, continued to flourish and found its greatest representative in Yūnus Emre.” Köprülü, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, 209.

²¹⁵ The prominent role that aurality and musical instruments played in mediating communal experience of these ‘higher meanings’ is most notable in the practice of samā’, which was institutionalized within the fledgling Mowlavī order after Rūmī’s death. As Sunni M. Fass has noted, while samā’ literally means “listening” or “audition,” it also incorporates “the ideas of listening as an art form; a state of interior attentiveness; contemplation; and the Qur’ānic notion of hearing as a mode of knowledge and as one that is more trustworthy than vision” (Fass, “Music,” 534). Moreover, just as Rūmī was forced to defend Sanā’ī and ‘Atṭār — and by extension, his own *vazn* and *ṭarz* — he was likewise obliged to defend the sensual practice of samā’. In one instance, Rūmī had to demonstrate the efficacy of samā’ to a troublesome Turkish jurist, which he accomplished by choosing a song to perform on the rebec. Everyone present was deeply moved by Rūmī’s performance, and perhaps not surprisingly: the song which Rūmī chose to defend the samā’ was known as the “gharīb’s rebec,” and while lost to us today, Aflākī notes that it described the pitiful state of gharībs living in a strange land.

The choice of the ‘gharīb’s rebec,’ as well as the audience that rebec was directed toward, might have something significant to tell us about the relationship between the figure of the gharīb and other controversial literary mediums at this moment in time. As we have noted in chapter one, the 13th century

phonological properties, oral recitations of the Turkish and Greek sections of the *Rabāb-nāma* at least still would have held some familiarity to Persians and Arabs who might not have understood those languages as well. Of course, the combination of *rabāb*, meter, and literary style would have made the Turkish and Greek sections of the *Rabāb-nāma* aurally resemble *Masnavī* in particular, whose meter, as well as auditory mode and communal setting in the *khāneqāh*, was already familiar to Rūmī’s audience to the extent that it was “seated in the nature of the companions.” In addition to all this, Solṭān Valad was also careful to frame the Turkish and Greek sections of the *Rabāb-nāma* with lengthy introductions in both Persian and Classical Arabic, the sacred language of the Qur’ān. The Arabic portion of the *Rabāb-nāma* directly precedes the Turkish and ‘colloquial’ Greek, contextualizing these nascent literary languages under the auspices of its sacred authority.

For this reason, Solṭān Valad did not need to mount a carefully articulated and lengthy defense of writing in Turkish as a literary language, despite the fact that only a few decades earlier, Ebn Bībī had derided Mehmed Bey because he wanted Turkish to replace Persian in the “imperial council, the inner and outer courts, the assembly, and the public square.”²¹⁶ By showing how these linguistic ‘gharībs’ could work in concert, even

witnessed a demographic and political crisis in Rūm, with widespread upheaval and displaced populations on a massive scale following the wake of the Mongol invasions. While the trope of separation from God was an ancient one, it had begun to be couched in terms which indirectly reflected the vocabulary of social dispersion, displacement, and migration in the 13th and early 14th centuries. At the same time, while we have observed that Rūmī considered ‘higher meanings’ to supersede earthly reality and even transcend language itself, he was meticulous in rendering those higher meanings accessible to the community he was attempting to foster and grow. Quite literally, those meanings had to be framed in a language which his audience could grasp, and sometimes this meant connecting ‘transcendental’ higher meanings with locally contingent analogies. Although the story of the ‘gharīb’s rebec’ only represents a single example and therefore we should be cautious about inflating its importance, this story at least suggests that a concept of the ‘gharīb’ had enough affective resonance with the Turkish jurist that it even served Rūmī’s greater purpose of *justifying and legitimizing his chosen medium of expression*. A primary objective of this chapter is to mine the implications of this suggestion.

²¹⁶ Yildiz, “Mongol Rule,” 46.

while articulating a similar discourse in dissimilar ways, Solţān Valad could directly demonstrate how these ‘others,’ as well as the languages they spoke, could serve to proselytize Rūmī’s own teachings to new audiences just as effectively. At the same time, the appropriation of ‘arūz in general and the ‘meter and mode’ of the *Maşnavī* in particular was not a reductive, teleologically predetermined, or passive act, but rather represents a general mission to legitimize a spiritual covenant and literary language in tandem, while specifically linking different literary works within the same interpretive matrix. In fact, as with many of Solţān Valad’s endeavors as the successor of his father, configuring Turkish and ‘colloquial’ Greek *as* literary languages marks an ambitious expansion of Rūmī’s original mission in Konya.

As noted in my introduction, Solţān Valad mirrored and intensified his father’s practices in many ways.²¹⁷ For one, he continued to maintain close relationships with local Saljūq and Mongol sovereigns, even going so far as to defend his praise of such men to his disciples in the *Rabāb-nāma*²¹⁸, which was not always popular. He also represented his father’s teachings in language that was both direct and plain; whereas Rūmī preferred to use a series of interlocking parables to illuminate the spiritual states of his disciples, Solţān Valad more often provided clear exegeses of the parables and figural language in his own work. Perhaps most telling, whereas Rūmī was largely concerned

²¹⁷ The traditional accounts of Solţān Valad’s life are careful to stress continuity between father and son above all else. Aflākī quotes Rūmī as saying that of all people, his son resembled him the most “in physique and in character,” and Aflākī even argues that Solţān Valad was Rūmī’s reason for coming into the world, since Solţān Valad “clarified and explained all his father’s words by means of wondrous parables and incomparable similitudes” (O’Kane, trans., *Feats of the Knowers*, 547; 552; 561). Rūmī reportedly even bestowed the city of Konya to his son, passing on his own spiritual authority to his son and followers. For the major contemporary accounts of Solţān Valad’s life, see also Solţān Valad, *Valad-nāma: Maşnavī-ye Valad*, ed. J. Homā’ī (Tehran: Ketābforūshī va Chāpkhāna-ye Eqbāl, 1936); and Farīdūn ebn Aḥmad Sepahsālār, *Resāla-ye Farīdūn ebn Aḥmad Sepahsālār dar Aḥvāl-e Mowlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Mawlavī*, ed. Sa’īd Nafīsī (Tehran: Eqbāl, 1946). The most noteworthy general study on Solţān Valad is Abdūlbāki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlānā’dan Sonra Mevlevīlik* (İstanbul: İnkılāp ve Aka kitabevleri, 1983).

with establishing his authority and shaping his local interpretive community, as we have already seen, Solṭān Valad trained disciples to travel across Rūm, spread his father's teachings, and establish what would become the foundation of the ṭarīqa-based Ṣūfism for his subsequent followers.²¹⁹

A primary difference between Solṭān Valad and Rūmī is one of scope, then, both in terms of crossing geographic and linguistic frontiers. For Solṭān Valad, reaching new audiences didn't always mean reaching distant audiences, and hence we can observe not only an attempt to bring translocal spaces within the realm of literary production in Konya, but also a reconfiguration of who should be included within *local* spheres of literary production. In some ways, this brings us back to the figure of the gharīb, as the challenge that faced Solṭān Valad was not only to legitimize and incorporate an ethnic and linguistic plurality of 'others' in the community he was shaping, but also to speak to these 'gharībs' in terms they could understand. Obviously, the opening of the *Rabāb-nāma* is directed towards a Persian-speaking audience, and not to the Turks and Greeks whom Solṭān Valad was also trying to draw into his new covenant. The figure of the gharīb works in this case because Rūmī had already defined true gharībs as those whose true attachment is to God, not to the world. It is not, however, part of the figural vocabulary that Solṭān Valad chose to address these Turkish and Greek communities.

We ought to ask, then, who exactly these 'gharībs' were, and how did Solṭān Valad aim to appropriate and reinterpret a conceptual 'language' which they would also understand? To answer that question, we need to take a closer look at the kinds of contact we know that Solṭān Valad had with both the Muslim and the non-Muslim populations of

²¹⁸ Soltan Valad, *Rabāb-nāma*, 35-38.

²¹⁹ Solṭān Valad, *Valad-nāma*, 155-156.

Konya. Much of this contact revolved around the common meeting-places such as the marketplace, or bazaar. As we have seen, Rūmī frequently had substantial contact with Turks, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews in the marketplace. Another important site was the madrasa, or institution of religious education, and the khāneqāh, or Ṣūfī lodge, the latter of which had recently multiplied across cities in Rūm in record numbers, helping to organize the heterogeneous and shifting urban populations of the 13th and 14th centuries around a new spiritual and social axis. Some of these lodges even appropriated Christian iconography in order to attract the diverse populations in the city. As Ethel Sara Wolper has demonstrated, such institutions additionally served as a focal point around which a variety of Muslims and non-Muslims engaged with one another theologically, economically, and socially.²²⁰

An anecdote recorded by Aflākī suggests that a similar larger process was happening in Konya as well. In the narrative, Solṭān Valad hired a group of Greek workers to repair the roof of the madrasa in Konya. While the Greeks were working, Solṭān Valad slipped outside to observe them discretely. Eventually, one of the laborers became aware that someone was watching them, and so he urged his companions to “do a good job, because the Master is watching us.”²²¹ When Solṭān Valad saw this, he was so pleased that he uttered “many divine insights and higher meanings that cannot be written down.”²²²

Up to this point, the narrative resembles a report we examined previously about Rūmī, who upon hearing a Turkish fox-seller crying “delku” in the market, went home

²²⁰ See Ethel Sara Wolper, *Cities and Saints: Sufism and the Transformation of Urban Space in Medieval Anatolia* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

²²¹ O’Kane, *Feats of the Knowers*, 560.

²²² *Ibid.*, 560.

and reflected on the inner meaning of the phrase, which signifies “Where is the heart” when homophonically rendered in Persian. But, whereas Rūmī was content to glean ineffable spiritual truths in unlikely places — the marketplace vocabulary of a Turkish fox-seller would certainly rank high on the list of unexpected sources for theological insight — Solṭān Valad went a step further and used the opportunity to teach the Greek workers the meaning of a ḥadīth by providing the *very behavior* of the Greeks as a way of illuminating the ḥadīth’s message. Solṭān Valad related the ḥadīth to the workers, telling them: “Doing good is to worship God as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him, He sees you.” The anecdote concludes after Solṭān Valad teaches the Greeks that the righteous shall be rewarded, even when God isn’t visible.

In other words, Solṭān Valad not only used a linguistic, ethnic, or religious ‘other’ to reach a higher spiritual state as did his father, but he also communicated his insights *back* to the ‘other’ using language and analogies they could understand. While this is only one anecdote, it is representative insofar as it touches upon the nature of Solṭān Valad’s principle of religious inclusion and outreach in general: he wanted, above all, not only to use others as a productive heuristic for illuminating one’s own spiritual condition, but to teach those others about higher truths directly. Most importantly, the anecdote typifies the pedagogical approach that defines Solṭān Valad’s literary production. Just as Ṣūfī lodges in Rūm had begun to speak the semiotic language of Christianity, appropriating the symbols of Christian churches as a way of engaging with non-Muslims inside ‘Islamic’ spaces, Solṭān Valad engaged with those populations in a prolonged way on a literary level, as he metaphorically gathered together the heterogeneous peoples of Konya — Greeks, Arabs, Turks, and Persians — by inscribing their languages within the

text of the *Rabāb-nāma*. As I previously noted, the text of the *Rabāb-nāma*, itself a figure for the gathering of irreducibly different ‘gharībs’ in separation from God, represents an attempt to organize the social and spiritual lives of Konya’s diverse population around the axis of Rūmī’s teachings, as interpreted by his son.

In this sense, Solṭān Valad was as much in dialog with his father’s literary legacy as he was with the minority populations around Konya. Both appropriations should be seen as two sides of the same strategy, for in relating his father’s teachings to ‘others’ such as the Greek laborers, Solṭān Valad actively appropriated and reinterpreted his father’s works by using analogies which he *also* appropriated from his target audience. This happened not only in real-life encounters between Solṭān Valad, Greeks, and Turks, but on a literary level as well. For instance, in two short passages taken from the *Maṣnavī* and the *Rabāb-nāma*, we can see a more concrete case of how Solṭān Valad engaged with his own literary past and a new audience at the same time, and in so doing, attempted to bring two different interpretive frameworks into the same authoritative literary sphere.

Both passages from the *Maṣnavī* and the *Rabāb-nāma* conceptualize the human body as a temporary lodging-place for something else, yet Rūmī and Solṭān Valad make this analogy in different languages, for different purposes, and for different audiences. In the fifth book of the *Maṣnavī*, Rūmī directly compares the body to a guest-house [*mehmān-khāna*], and therefore likens our thoughts to guests [*mehmānān*]. Those who welcome mental states both joyful and sorrowful, giving them lodging in the guest-house of the body, essentially resemble someone who is kind to strangers, or gharībs [*gharīb-navāz*]. Rūmī argues that these people are spiritual adepts [*āref*], who, like Abraham,

welcome the infidel [*kāfer*] and believer alike.²²³ In comparison, Solṭān Valad employs a similar concept in a passage from the *Rabāb-nāma*, although he wrote this passage not in Persian, but ‘vernacular’ Greek. Remarkably, the poem is also a dialog between Solṭān Valad and his father, allowing Solṭān Valad to ask his deceased father to explain how he conducts himself with the saints. Solṭān Valad further notes that whoever “buys and sells” [αγοράση να πουλήση] with Rūmī knows that the body is like a temporary dwelling place [σκήνωμα], but he cannot understand what that has to do with the saints.²²⁴ Rūmī responds to his son by stating our bodies are indeed dwelling places, *skenoma*, but the soul wants to return to the place whence it came. In order for that to happen, first our corporeal dwellings [σκήνωμα] must pass away, and then our souls will rejoice with the saints.

As D. Dedes has observed, Solṭān Valad’s word for ‘dwelling place’ here is the same word used in the Greek New Testament for ‘tabernacle.’ The author of 2 Peter 1:13-1:14 likewise uses σκήνωμα as a metaphor for the temporary dwelling of the soul in the body, noting that he must soon “put off my tabernacle” and leave this vale of tears. In other words, whereas Rūmī expressed that one should accommodate both heretical and orthodox mental states within the guest-house of the body, Solṭān Valad communicated the idea of the body as a guest-house *to* those heretic ‘infidels,’ or Greek-speaking Christian communities, by using a term they knew which already conveyed a particular theological meaning for Christians.²²⁵ He further used vocabulary which evoked the economic relationship between the khāneqāh and Greeks in Konya, as those who “buy

²²³ Rūmī, *Maṣnavī*, vol. 5, 241.

²²⁴ Solṭān Valad, *Rabāb-nāma*, 439.

and sell” with Rūmī are likewise privy to his secrets. The important point to be stressed here is that, once again, what we’re looking at here isn’t a form of unidirectional, linear form of literary appropriation or reinterpretation. Solṭān Valad is not simply attempting to ‘influence’ Greek thought in Konya by reductively rewriting his father’s teachings in a new language. Rather, Solṭān Valad folded together different conceptual languages and literary conventions into a new poetic ‘voice’ which aimed to engage with the Greek-speaking audiences of Konya.²²⁶

We can now turn to the Turkish section of the *Rabāb-nāma*, which exhibits a similar strategy of appropriating from a variety of sources and reinterpreting those appropriations within the ‘meter and mode’ — the authoritative hermeneutic matrix — of Rūmī’s *Maṣnavī*. Just as Solṭān Valad attempted to communicate with the Greek community of Konya via metaphors culled from the marketplace, he also engaged with Turkish speakers in the same manner. What better way to draw the illiterate and non-Persian speakers into dialog than to begin on grounds where both parties already interacted? The Turkish section of the *Rabāb-nāma* consequently begins with an exhortation, “Know that Mowlānā is of the saints of the tent-pole,” which firmly contextualizes the passage within Rūmī’s own literary activity, and commands that

²²⁵ D. Dedes argues that Solṭān Valad's use of the term indicates dialog occurred between the lodge in Konya and the Christian monastery of St. Chariton, which was nearby. See D. Dedes, "Ποίηματα Του Μωυλανά Ρουμύ [Poems by Mowlānā Rūmī]," *Ta Historika* 10, no. 18-19 (1993): 3-22.

²²⁶ Rūmī also wrote a few short lines of text in Turkish and Greek, and so to a certain extent, Solṭān Valad’s literary production continued the practices established by his father. We should keep in mind at least two noticeable differences, though. First, whereas Rūmī was born in Vakhsh and educated in Persian and Arabic speaking cities, Solṭān Valad spent his childhood in Greek, Turkish, Armenian, and Persian speaking regions of Rūm. He had more contact, and at an earlier age, with some of those languages than did his father, and so it stands to reason that Solṭān Valad’s own Turkish and Greek writings would be longer and more involved, actually taking the time to lay out basic theological positions and explain their meaning. Second, whereas Rūmī took great pains to establish the authoritative texts within his own literary community, bringing the ‘meter and mode’ of ‘Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī into the hermeneutic corpus of his own *Maṣnavī*, Solṭān Valad’s efforts were largely focused on expanding the reach of that hermeneutic framework within and beyond Konya.

because of this, one must do whatever Rūmī says.²²⁷ Solṭān Valad then presents the study of Rūmī’s teachings in economic metaphors, noting that words [*sözler*] become the riches [*māl*] of the wise, and therefore when a wise person hears Rūmī’s teachings, “he sells [*vīrer*] his riches and buys [*alır*] these words.”²²⁸ Solṭān Valad urges his audience to realize that in his words, there is life, but the wealth of men cannot endure.²²⁹

In many ways, the passage is reminiscent of the vernacular Greek section of the *Rabāb-nāma*, which also states that whoever “buys and sells” [αγοράση να πουλήση] with Rūmī knows how valuable his words are compared to other worldly goods. However, it is not the only instance of economic language within the text. Soon after urging his audience to repent and pray to God, Solṭān Valad goes on to note that while our bodies are asleep, are souls labor to return to their Creator. In fact, despite the limitations of our soporific bodies, our souls transfigure themselves into one hundred different forms: not only taking on the appearance of the sky and the earth, but also of the city [*ṣehr*], the marketplace [*bāzār*] and even individual shops [*dekān*]²³⁰. When we die and our bodies sleep forever, our souls will continue in this expansive labor if we have sought God on earth. Significantly, while elsewhere in the Turkish passage, Solṭān Valad notes that both king and slave will be one in the next life, the forms which the soul assumes here are not palatial, regal, or transcendently opulent, but rather are culled from the quotidian spheres of the cityscape; its markets, shops, and stands.

²²⁷ Solṭān Valad, *Rabāb-nāma*, 445.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 446.

²²⁹ Such employment of economic metaphors is by no means exclusive to Rūmī or Solṭān Valad, but of course can be found throughout the New Testament and the Qur’ān. However, I would suggest that this kind of metaphor had efficacy precisely because it related difficult theological lessons in tangible and comprehensible analogs taken from everyday life. The fact that the khāneqāh in Konya actually did have economic ties with Turkish, Greek, and Armenian speakers only serves to underscore the metaphor’s currency.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 449.

Even the sections of the *Rabāb-nāma* which speak about Turkish *in* Turkish employ similarly economic figures. For instance, when Solṭān Valad confesses that “had I known Turkish [*türkçe belsidem*]” he would have revealed all his secrets [*sırları*] directly to *you* [*size*], his Turkish-speaking audience, he poses this transmission of knowledge as an transfer of riches [*gani*] “from me [*benden*]” to all the poor [*cümle yoksullarā*, *lit. all who have nothing*].²³¹ Here, Solṭān Valad explicitly states his desire to communicate directly with the heterogeneous populations of Konya in a language they understand, and in so doing, transform the poor — those who cannot access the higher truths he describes — into the wealthy, those with ‘words’ and secrets of their own. Furthermore, he describes this process of shaping a new interpretive community through figural language rooted in pre-existing economic relationships between the khāneqāh and the Greek and Turkish populations of Konya.

As we have seen in the case of the Greek laborers, shaping an interpretive community need not always be done through literary means, but if the *Rabāb-nāma* was to have currency beyond Konya, it also had to be ‘competitive’ with other authoritative forms of ‘literature’ in the region. I have argued in this section that ‘competitiveness’ meant at least two things. First, the *Rabāb-nāma* drew heavily on preexisting models of what a literary text looked and sounded like, as well as made various appeals to the authority of Rūmī, the *Maṣnavī*, and holy scripture. Solṭān Valad further bolstered the appropriation of the formal and symbolic authority of these sources by presenting the Turkish and Greek sections of the *Rabāb-nāma* as gharībs, who in Rūmī’s own configuration, are the true lovers and beloveds of God. Furthermore, as we have seen in

²³¹ Ibid., 451.

chapter one, Rūmī often used the figure of the *gharīb* to challenge the preconceived expectations of his audience; more often than not in Rūmī’s sermons and *Masnavī*, the *gharīb* is someone unexpected and surprising, often overlooked and unknown. Hence, Solṭān Valad likely was drawing on these perception of the *gharīb* in his own presentation of literary Turkish and Greek: the stranger may not be the one you suspect, but ultimately strangers of any origin can bear the full authority of Islam—even Turks and Greeks.

In addition to the multiple appropriations which his Persian and Arabic speaking audiences were familiar with, Solṭān Valad was secondly tasked with speaking in an easily comprehensible, and at times already familiar, manner to the Turkish and Greek communities of Rūm. I have argued that he did this by also appropriating and reinterpreting widely resonant metaphors which were based on the kinds of contact Solṭān Valad already had with those peoples. Therefore, I have suggested that we ought to view both literary and extra-literary appropriation in this context not as a reductive or unidirectional process, but the folding together of multiple ‘sources,’ reinterpreted to meet the needs of a particular community, even to form that community and define it as such. In addition, these appropriations served another practical purpose not only of helping to configure a new literary language, but also to help ensure that this language would be grounded in the same kind of literary and epistemic production as Solṭān Valad participated in.

Again, authorizing the *rabāb*, or communal covenant, of literary Turkish through the *Masnavī*’s ‘meter and mode’ required a reinterpretation of his father’s legacy as much as it did an engagement with actual Turkish and Greek communities. As we have seen here, Solṭān Valad did not reductively ‘copy’ the poetics of the *Masnavī* in general, or the

poetics of Arabic and Persian literature in particular, in order to communicate with his new target audiences. Instead, he actively reinterpreted those poetics and adapted them to become comprehensible according to the understanding of his own audience. Of course, while Solṭān Valad and Konya only present us with one case study for understanding the legitimization of literary Turkish in Rūm, the examples of ‘Āşık Paşa and Yūnus Emre further suggest that Solṭān Valad was part of a greater process, as these authors likewise attempted to inscribe literary Turkish with other literary conventions for similar motives. As I will argue, ‘Āşık Paşa and Yūnus Emre likewise pursued a highly similar communicative strategy to establish new social and spiritual covenants through the configuration of Turkish not only as a literary language, but as a competitive language capable of expressing Islamic concepts.

Hence, ‘Āşık Paşa and Yūnus Emre also allow us to observe this complex negotiation between literary systems, both past and present, both Persian and Turkish, albeit with less information about their own engagement with their particular interpretive communities. What matters for our purposes, however, is that they appropriated the figure of the gharīb in their *Turkish* writings, and they do so in significant and striking ways to legitimize either their literary language or their own spiritual authority. In following the development of an analogous gharīb in Turkish letters, I will argue that we can begin to establish some basic parameters regarding how different acts of appropriation serve as links between these different literatures and literary languages. Turkish literature in Rūm was not monolithically ‘influenced’ by Persian, and neither was it the result of proto-nationalist spirit willing itself into existence out of the ether. Instead, I will argue that in examining the appropriations of literary figures such as gharīb, we can

better assess how the early authors of literary Turkish in Rūm actively configured new literary languages and religious communities through similar communicative and literary strategies.

4. Literary Legitimization through Appropriation: ‘Āşīk Paşa’s *Garīb-nāme*

This section presents my second case study of early legitimizers of Turkish as a literary language, ‘Āşīk Paşa. Ironically, while scholars generally note the importance of ‘Āşīk Paşa, there is also a tendency to downplay his major work, the *Garīb-nāme*, or *Book of the Stranger*, as merely imitative of Persian literature.²³² Compared to Yūnus Emre,²³³ he has received considerably less critical or popular attention, despite the fact that the *Garīb-*

²³² For example, as Mecdut Mansuroğlu notes briefly in passing, “The great mystic of [the 14th century], however, ‘Āşīk Pasha with his long poem *Gharībnāma* ‘Book of the Stranger’, is a mere imitator of Jalāladdīn Rūmī and Sultān Valad.” (see Mecdut Mansuroğlu, “Turkish Literature through the Ages (with Bibliography),” *Central Asiatic Journal* 9, no. 2 (1964): 92.) In contrast, Mansuroğlu more enthusiastically asserts: “But Yūnus Amra was the greatest figure in [the 13th century]. He is regarded as the best Turkish popular mystic poet. His art is essentially one of the people, i.e. it is Turkish. It was through this mystical verses that there developed a tradition of writing poems in the language of the people and in the popular syllabic metre, which did not lose its power even in the period when Persian influence was at its height” (Ibid., 90) This attitude is also reflected by E. J. W. Gibb, who admired the scope and structure of the *Garīb-nāme*, but was even more critical in his consideration of its poetics. He argued over a century ago that the verses in the *Garīb-nāme* “read smoothly, and in matters of technique are on the whole tolerably correct; but poetry they are not. The work is a poem in form alone, and at a later period would most probably have been written in prose. As it is, the author naturally took Sultan Veled and Mevlana Jelal-ud-Din as his models; they wrote in verse, so he did the same; they used a particular metre, so he used it also; they, engrossed in the didactic side of their work, wholly overlooked the artistic, so he did likewise. [...] His work has even less of the quality of poetry than Veled’s; and were it not for the curious conceptions and quaint illustrations that are scattered throughout its chapters, it would prove but dreary reading.” (see Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, 185.) However, as I have argued here, more important than whatever aesthetic standards we want to impose on these premodern works is the fact that both ‘Āşīk Paşa and Solṭān Valad aimed to communicate in easily accessible terms, in part to introduce as well as explain complicated Şūfī ideas in a simple, straightforward, and (at that time) even popular style. As I have argued, they sought to configure the Turkish language as literary according to conventions within the greater Islamic literary world, as well as to cultivate a new socio-religious community in tandem.

²³³ A bibliography compiled on Yūnus Emre reveals over one thousand works dedicated to this poet alone. See Mustafa Tatçı and Suzan Gürelli, *Yunus Emre Bibliyografyası: Kitap-makale* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1988).

nāme presents one of the earliest and most nuanced arguments for the legitimization of literary Turkish. In contradistinction to this focus on the aesthetics of the *Garīb-nāme*, a massive work whose primary aim is to instruct Turkish speakers about a particular practice of Islam, I will argue here that ‘Āşık Paşa also pursued a strategy of appropriating a variety of literary conventions and widely resonant concepts from different sources, which he reinterpreted in order to configure Turkish as a literary language and Turkish speakers as a religious community. Therefore, by focusing on the appropriation of the figure of the gharīb in ‘Āşık Paşa’s masterpiece, I will build upon my previous argument by suggesting that ‘Āşık Paşa did not reductively ‘copy’ Arabic and Persian literary conventions and poetics, but rather he dynamically appropriated and reinterpreted those conventions, as well as drew from popular understandings of similar concepts, in order to construct his own literary authority for a new community.

As I have previously noted, whereas there is an abundance of information on the complex ways that Rūmī and Solţān Valad shaped their own interpretive communities, we have less information on ‘Āşık Paşa’s life, whether we cull those details from colophons of the *Garīb-nāme*, from the writings of ‘Āşık Paşa’s son, Elvān Çelebi, or from Laţīfī (d. 1582), the sole tazkera writer who provides any biographical information at all. According to Kemal Yavuz, who compiled the important critical edition of the *Garīb-nāme*, ‘Āşık Paşa was born in 1272 in Arapkir, which is in the region of central Turkey today.²³⁴ His grandfather, an influential Şūfī by the name of Baba Ilyās, emigrated from the Khorāsān region to Rūm much like Rūmī’s own family; unlike Rūmī, however, Ghiyaş al-Dīn Kaykhosraw executed Baba Ilyās for fomenting an uprising

²³⁴ ‘Āşık Paşa, *Garīb-Nāme: Tıpkıbasım, Karşılaştırmalı Metin ve Aktarma*, ed. Kemal Yavuz, vol. 1 (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2000), XXVIII.

against Saljūq authority, in which many Christians reportedly took part.²³⁵ Following the execution, ‘Āşık Paşa’s father, Muhlis Paşa, fled to Egypt, where he reportedly received approval and patronage from the sultan. He remained there for seven years before returning to Rūm, where his son ‘Āşık Paşa was born and raised.

As Ahmet Ercilasun has observed, ‘Āşık Paşa grew up at a time when the population of Turks in Rūm had greatly increased due to waves of migration and decades of warfare.²³⁶ ‘Āşık Paşa may have been born in an increasingly Turkish-speaking region, but it was also a fundamentally polylingual and polyvocal world. Linguistically, ‘Āşık Paşa’s childhood was also similar to Soltān Valad’s multilingual upbringing. His early education included not only the study of Arabic and Persian, but he also learned some Armenian and Hebrew.²³⁷ Perhaps further underscoring that point, ‘Āşık Paşa’s son, Elvān Çelebi, wrote upon the death of his father that “Armenians, Jews, and Christians” all mourned the loss of this influential Şūfī leader, which we ought to recall was also how Aflākī described the affect of Rūmī’s death on the population of Konya.²³⁸ As Cemal Kafadar points out, Çelebi “may have wanted “to indicate that ‘Āşık Paşa’s influence had spread over all non-Muslims,”²³⁹ which certainly seems possible had he learned the

²³⁵ Yavuz defends Baba Ilyās as innocent of inciting rebellion. He notes that Baba Ilyās was against the uprising, and moreover, that Elvān Çelebi, reported that the rebellious faction were actually Christians, as they wore the zunnar, which was a belt that identified Christians in the region, around their waist (Ibid., XXVIII).

²³⁶ Ibid., IX.

²³⁷ Ibid., XXX.

²³⁸ See Elvān Çelebi, *Menākıbu ’l-kudsıyye fī menāsıbi ’l-ünsıyye: Baba İlyas-ı Horasânî ve sülâlesinin menkabevî tarihi*, eds. İsmail E. Erünsal and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1984), line 1546. For a general study on ‘Āşık Paşa and his son, see Ethem Erkoç, *‘Āşık Paşa ve Oğlu Elvan Çelebi*, (Çorum: E. Erkoç, 2005).

²³⁹ Kafadar notes that this was not impossible, and in fact had precedence elsewhere in Rūm at this time: “Hācī Bektaş, a disciple of Baba Ilyās, was revered as Saint Charalambos by some Christians; and Elvān Çelebi himself was to be identified by a sixteenth century German traveler, presumably on the basis of reports he heard from local Christians around Çelebi’s shrine, as a friend of Saint George. Strikingly, such saint-sharing by Muslims and Christians was not limited to dervishly figures but could even include holy warriors, namely, gazis.” (See Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the*

languages of the disparate communities in his region. Certainly, as his monumental *Garīb-nāme* makes clear, he wanted to communicate on grounds and using terms which his audience could already understand, which is essentially the attitude taken by Rūmī, Solṭān Valad, and a wide variety of other authors which I will discuss in the next chapter.

In particular, ‘Āṣīḳ Paşa aimed to instruct Turkish speakers about the basic tenets of his practice of Islam, and he wanted to do so through the composition of a book which would live on after his death. However, while the *Rabāb-nāma* was written in a variety of languages, the language of the *Garīb-nāme* is mostly Turkish. This necessitated a more direct and involved defense of Turkish as a literary language, which further underscores that composing in literary Turkish in Rūm was not something that could be taken for granted in the early 14th century. Equally important for the present study, just as we have seen in the case of Solṭān Valad, the figure of the garīb in the *Garīb-nāme* is directly related to the legitimization of Turkish as a literary language. For that reason, we must first examine the strategies of appropriation and reinterpretation that ‘Āṣīḳ Paşa pursued in order to legitimize literary Turkish, and only then can we examine how the figure of the garīb serves as the centerpiece of this argument.

First and foremost, as we have seen in the cases of the *Kutadgu Bilig*, the *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, and the *Rabāb-nāma*, rather than try to eclipse preexisting literary languages and forms, the *Garīb-nāme* instead seeks to negotiate a competitive place

Ottoman State (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 74. For more on the porousness between Christian and Muslim communities, see also Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). Again, we ought to draw parallels between ‘Āṣīḳ Paşa’s followers and the followers of Rūmī and Solṭān Valad, as it seems that in both cases, these religious figures interacted with a variety of peoples not only from different linguistic backgrounds, but also from different religions, sometimes in cases where conversion did not occur. Instead, as I argued in the case of Solṭān Valad, these figures frequently sought first to engage with their heterogeneous communities in terms those communities could understand.

within the greater literary canons and poetic conventions of Arabic and Persian literature. To that end, ‘Āşık Paşa likewise pursued a similar strategy of appropriating a variety of literary conventions. For instance, he writes in an accentual meter and in *masnavī* form instead of utilizing the syllabic meter of ‘traditional’ Turkish literature. He also rather explicitly contextualizes the *Garīb-nāme* within the matrix of Persian literature and Qur’ānic authority. For example, the work opens with an encomium to God in Persian before continuing to praise the Prophet in Turkish. Notably, after lauding Moḥammad’s virtues and compassion, ‘Āşık Paşa states that the Prophet was also the “most eloquent speaker of Arabic and Persian²⁴⁰ [*‘acem*],” which could also generally be understood as Arabic and any other language, even Turkish.

From there, just like Rūmī and Solṭān Valad, ‘Āşık Paşa also constructs a particular spiritual genealogy, rooted in the major figures of Islam, which of course implicitly culminates in the person of ‘Āşık Paşa himself. By praising the literary and epistemic production of these major Islamic figures, he essentially depicts the composition of books and creation of Islamic communities as a major virtue.²⁴¹ Only after establishing such activity as virtuous, which he does by citing and drawing from the unimpeachable authority of the Qur’ān, ‘Āşık Paşa begins to mount a defense of literary Turkish in the Turkish language — a defense which he had already begun by contextualizing his project under the auspices of Arabic and Persian literary production. “And now,” he writes in Turkish, “know thusly that in our days, many of the people have

²⁴⁰ In a general sense, ‘acem also can signify non-Arabic languages. ‘Āşık Paşa, *Garīb-Nāme*, vol. 1, 5.

²⁴¹ For instance, he praises the saints and friends of God, those founders of *ṭarīqats* [*ebnā’-ī ṭarīkat*] and defenders of religion. But while these men enjoyed preternatural saintliness, ‘Āşık Paşa is quick to remind us of how they put their knowledge to work: these saints composed many letters and books in Arabic and Persian for the benefit of mankind; it was through the writing of books that Muslims were

much unmet need for the comprehension of higher meanings.”²⁴² He notes that because Turkish speakers—both the elite and the general populace—are unable to gather a single flower from the garden of higher secrets,

A book in the Turkish language was arranged [*tertīb*], and
Several words in verse [*lafz-ı manzūm*] were said within that arrangement,

That profit should reach people both low [*‘āmm*] and high [*hāṣṣa*].
Poem:

While the Turkish language is spoken herein,
The stage posts of meaning [*ma‘nī menzili*] are illuminated.

Because you know all the stage posts of the way,
Do not despise the Turkish and Tajik²⁴³ languages.²⁴⁴

This preliminary justification for the composition of the *Garīb-nāme* is based on communal necessity: the need to bring Turkish speakers into a particular fold of Islam by making such ‘higher meanings’ accessible. However, ‘Āşık Paşa only makes that necessity clear after locating the *Garīb-nāme* within the context of Persian literature and Qur’ānic authority. Again, unlike Mehmed Bey, who supposedly wanted to usurp Persian

able to escape the machinations of God’s enemy. He further reinforces this praise by citing surat 54:55 of the Qur’ān, which notes that wise men have reached a seat of high honor near the supreme Creator.

²⁴² ‘Āşık Paşa, *Garīb-nāme*, vol 1., 6.

²⁴³ ‘Tajik’ is sometimes translated as Persian, although its meaning at this period in time was more nuanced. As John Perry has noted, “By the eleventh century the Qarakhanid Turks applied this term more specifically to the Persian Muslims in the Oxus basin and Khorāsān, who were variously the Turks’ rivals, models, overlords (under the Samanid Dynasty), and subjects (from Ghaznavid times on). Persian writers of the Ghaznavid, Seljuq and Atābak periods (ca. 1000–1260) adopted the term and extended its use to cover Persians in the rest of Iran, now under Turkish rule, as early as the poet ‘Onşori, ca. 1025. Iranians soon accepted it as an ethnonym, as is shown by a Persian court official’s referring to *mā tāzikān* “we Tajiks”. The distinction between Turk and Tajik became stereotyped to express the symbiosis and rivalry of the (ideally) nomadic military executive and the urban civil bureaucracy.” See John Perry, “Tajik I. The Ethnonym: Origins and Application,” in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Columbia University Center for Iranian Studies, 2009), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/tajik-i-the-ethnonym-origins-and-application>.

and Arabic as administrative and literary languages, ‘Āşık Paşa appropriates and reinterprets the literary codes of Persian and Arabic literatures in order to legitimize Turkish as a literary language (and, additionally, Turkish-speakers as partners of the greater Islamic world). Just as importantly, ‘Āşık Paşa does not neatly divide his audience between the elite [*hāşşa*] and the general populace [*āmm*], but instead cuts across the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture equally. As we will later see, this has implications for how we might approach his appropriation of the figure of the *gharīb*.

In fact, ‘Āşık Paşa makes two defenses of Turkish within the *Garīb-nāme*: just as he frames his initial defense of literary Turkish between two couplets in Arabic, he also frames the entire *Garīb-nāme* between two defenses of literary Turkish, which he argues should be part and parcel of epistemic production within the world of Islam.²⁴⁵ To this end, ‘Āşık Paşa explains that the structure of the ten sections of the *Garīb-nāme* correspond to equivalent verses in the Qur’ān, wherein God blessed or cursed others ten times. ‘Āşık Paşa describes these passages in the Qur’ān in detail, carefully weaving Qur’ānic Arabic between his own couplets of poetry. All in all, he cites nineteen verses from the Qur’ān within his meticulous explanation for the structure of his work.

Only after ‘Āşık Paşa justifies his work *through* the Qur’ān does he make another attempt to legitimize his use of the Turkish language in particular. In other words, just as

²⁴⁴ ‘Āşık Paşa, *Garīb-nāme*, vol 1, 6.

²⁴⁵ This second defense of literary Turkish is a continuation not only of ‘Āşık Paşa’s spiritual genealogy, but also creates a genealogy for the *Garīb-nāme* itself. Additionally, the second defense of literary Turkish involves more personal reasons for wanting to create the *Garīb-nāme*. For instance, ‘Āşık Paşa notes that some of these people go on to obtain great wealth [*mülki*], some go on to achieve great fame through their art [*şan ‘at-ıla ol kişi geldi ada*], and some go on to write many books. What is common to all, however, is that “all of these have departed; their work remains as their memento; God has ordered the world in this way” (see ‘Āşık Paşa, *Garīb-nāme*, vol 4., 928). ‘Āşık Paşa tells us that he has taken stock of his own mortality as well, and he realizes that like all men, he must depart from this vale of tears, as he too has been called by God to leave behind a memorial. For this reason, “I gathered ten chapters together in one place,” with ten stories within each chapter, and wrote these down in a single book (Ibid., 932).

we have seen in the case of Solṭān Valad, who encoded the Turkish and Greek sections of the *Rabāb-nāma* in the authoritative ‘meter and style’ of the *Maṣnavī*, it is only after appropriating particular literary forms and the canonical authority of the Qur’ān, represented here by the incorporation of verses in Classical Arabic, that ‘Āşīk Paşa begins to argue more explicitly about the capacity of Turkish to become a literary language. In fact, he already began this argument by sufficiently demonstrating that literary Turkish can both look and sound like major Arabic and Persian ‘texts’ within the greater Islamic world. Having demonstrated this capacity through various acts of literary appropriation, ‘Āşīk Paşa again repeats the couplet of poetry which commences the work, commanding his audience again “not to condemn the Turkish and Tajik languages,”²⁴⁶ in order to introduce the argument that all languages are capable of revealing higher meanings about Islam:

There is regulation [*ḡabṭ*] and structure [*uṣūl*] in every language.
Upon these all intellect gathers.

[But] no one has investigated the Turkish language,
No one has ever been enraptured with the Turks.

Turks, too, did not know those [other] languages’
Narrow way and sublime stage posts.

Therefore this *Garīb-nāme* was written [lit., came to language].
That whoever speaks this language would know these higher secrets.²⁴⁷

In a sense, ‘Āşīk Paşa’s claim that Turkish can convey “higher meanings,” as there is “regulation and structure in every language,” ultimately serves as a claim that *any*

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 954.

language can reveal such “meaning.” Of course, this way of theorizing language is also an appropriation of sorts, reinterpreted for a new audience, as Rūmī and Solṭān Valad likewise asserted that ‘Truth’ [*Haqq*] or God exists beyond language, and consequently all languages occupy an equally lateral and displaced vantage point in revealing ‘Truth.’ Along the same line of thought, ‘Āşık Paşa warns his audience, “Do not assume that higher meanings are in one language,”²⁴⁸ stating elsewhere that “there are higher meanings in every tongue for knowing; God is possible to find on every path.²⁴⁹” Furthermore, because no language has an absolute monopoly revealing “meaning,” ‘Āşık Paşa likewise argues that “in every language there are words that [tell of] higher secrets; the [outer] surface of [these] higher meanings is not hidden from sight.²⁵⁰”

While the claims made by ‘Āşık Paşa were widely posited in Şūfī discourse in Rūm, he also reinterpreted those discourses to make a specific argument about the Turkish language in particular, and not simply about language as such. Here, we come to the underlying conceit of the *Garīb-nāme*: the ability of “meaning” from an outside realm to enter into the Turkish language specifically, where “meaning” could be expressed using concepts already indigenous to that language. To this end, preceding this entire versified defense of literary Turkish is a simple prose paragraph which contextualizes the production of the *Garīb-nāme*. In this passage, ‘Āşık Paşa essentially proposes the idea that “meaning” itself—that is, knowledge of Islam—is akin to a stranger from another realm:

²⁴⁷ This text is found in the Konya manuscript of the *Garīb-nāme*. Ibid., 955.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 956.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 956.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 956.

This is the reason [he] divided this book into ten sections and in every section there are ten wondrous [*ajīb*] and strange [*garīb*] stories, and the reason [he] articulated such rarities of art. Whoever should request of it shall receive [much] gain and be of sound judgment of the straight path, firm of step and of breath. And this book was named the *Garīb-nāme* [*Book of the Garīb*] because all of these aforementioned higher-secrets are *garīb* in the Turkish language.²⁵¹

Note here that ‘Āşık Paşa does not claim that literary Turkish is a ‘stranger’ or ‘strange’ on the threshold of Anatolian letters; quite the opposite. Instead, he plainly states that the episteme configured in Persian and Arabic — those higher secrets he traces back to the Prophet Moḥammad — is *itself* strange in the Turkish tongue. This *garīb* is thus a figure of literary and epistemic production, of “meaning” from another realm, expressed in a comprehensible, ‘localized’ manner. Consequently, from ‘Āşık Paşa’s perspective, the Turkish *garīb* is interconnected with Arabic and Persian literary production and not merely derivative of it, because all three languages can ultimately point differently to a higher Signified—God—who resides outside of human speech on a radically different metaphysical plane.

However, ‘Āşık Paşa did not write his defense of literary Turkish for the benefit of that ‘higher’ plane; he wrote it, as I have previously argued, to posit that Turkish could be competitive alongside the literary languages of Arabic and Persian. Certainly, he chose a widely recognizable concept—the *gharīb*—to further bolster the other strategies of legitimization he pursued. As Franz Rosenthal has argued, any literate Persian or Arabic speaking audience would likely have been familiar with the ‘*gharīb*’ as an Islamic concept. In addition, the famous ḥadīth, ‘Islam began as a *gharīb* and will return as a *gharīb*,’ was familiar to Rūmī’s father in Khorāsān as well as to his interpretive

²⁵¹ Ibid., 924.

community in Konya, and Yavuz even posits this ḥadīth as sharing the same semantic fields as the title of the *Garīb-nāme*.²⁵² Given that Solṭān Valad had begun to send disciples across Rūm to spread his father’s teachings before ‘Āşık Paşa undertook writing the *Garīb-nāme*, it is probable that ‘Āşık Paşa, as well as other Persian and Turkish speakers, were widely familiar with Rūmī’s own configuration (or the configuration he also utilized) of the gharīb. That configuration, we should remember, signified a person who was truly devoted to God, and hence a ‘stranger’ in this world, like the Prophet himself.

On the most basic level, ‘Āşık Paşa’s appropriation of the garīb allowed him to reinforce his literary genealogy which begins with the prophet, who, according to the ḥadīth, also had strange beginnings. By employing the concept of “garīb” as his central figural conceit, ‘Āşık Paşa asserts that he has access to the same source of spiritual knowledge as do figures such as Rūmī or even Moḥammad;²⁵³ a source beyond language which is native to no language, even the one spoken by the prophet. This is no small claim, especially considering that other religious figures such as Bahā’ al-Dīn, Rūmī, and Solṭān Valad likewise made similar widely recognizable and therefore competitive statements about their own authority through the figure of the gharīb, although none of these authors had done so in order to systematically legitimize a single language in particular.²⁵⁴ Consequently, by appropriating the figure of the gharīb for a new context, ‘Āşık Paşa was able to stake a claim to legitimacy for himself *and* for Turkish as a

²⁵² Ibid., 924.

²⁵³ In Kemal Yavuz’s translation of the *Garīb-nāme* into modern Turkish, garīb is rendered as ‘original’ [*orijinal*] or ‘interesting’ [*ilginç, enteresan*], drawing on the ‘extraordinary’ sense of the word, whereas the *Garīb-nāme* itself is usually translated into English as *The Book of the Stranger*. Ibid., 925.

²⁵⁴ In other words, the appropriation of the figure of the garīb was decidedly not ‘reductive’ or ‘imitative,’ but instead ‘Āşık Paşa reinterpreted the highly recognizable figure of the garīb in order to

literary language, and he furthermore did so by using the same term which other authors of Arabic and Persian likewise appropriated to articulate their own authority. As I have argued here, ‘Āşık Paşa achieved this by encoding the *Garīb-nāme* in a particular meter favored by Rūmī and Solṭān Valad, by appropriating ubiquitously authoritative texts such as the Qur’ān, and by reinterpreting Arabic and Persian literary conventions, such as the figure of the garīb, to justify the competitive inclusion of Turkish within the arena of Anatolian letters.

However, the point that bears stressing is that, according to ‘Āşık Paşa, languages can reveal the hidden knowledge of God in different ways and from different vantage points. “No one is able to put a seal [*khatm*] on meaning,” he notes, for the simple reason that “everyone spoke what they knew” and “no one has completed this labor.”²⁵⁵ We also ought to ask, then, to what extent ‘Āşık Paşa’s appropriations from other literary languages resonated with what various Turkish communities already “knew.” As we have seen in the previous cases of Rūmī and Solṭān Valad, both of these authors labored to locate their literary production within particular discourses and traditions in the greater Islamic world through various acts of appropriation, as well as to reinterpret ‘popular’ literary forms, topics, and topoi which resonated widely with their target audiences. Throughout this section, I have likewise argued that ‘Āşık Paşa practiced a similar strategy of appropriation from various other literary conventions in order to communicate with a new audience in an easily accessible manner, yet still to be competitive within a greater literary space. Like Solṭān Valad in particular, he also did so to configure a new literary language and religious community in tandem.

accomplish a feat even greater than the *Rabāb-nāma* of Solṭān Valad, who still recognized his own limitations in mobilizing Turkish as a literary language.

Yet, as I will begin to argue here and will continue to argue in the next section, there is also evidence that the ‘garīb’ which ‘Āşık Paşa appropriated and reinterpreted was not based in literary conventions of Arabic and Persian alone, or from the semiotic constellations of Şūfī discourses only, but also was partially grounded in a similarly popular understanding of ‘strangers’ in Turkish speaking communities. In fact, by the time that ‘Āşık Paşa composed his *Garīb-nāme*, one of the first major works of Anatolian Turkish literature, the garīb had already become a part of the Turkish lexicon through extra-literary channels. We know this in part because by the mid-13th century, a lexicon by the name of the *Codex Cumanicus*, or by *Tatar Til* or *Tatarçe*, made its way into European libraries, carrying the ever-wandering garīb with it.

In some respects, the *Codex Cumanicus* resembles al-Kāshgharī’s *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* in that it contains a Turkish lexicon, albeit in a dialect spoken by Turks who had been driven from southern Russia during the Mongol invasions. Some of this Turkic tribe migrated westward and resettled in Hungary, becoming absorbed by other Tatar tribes, in regions where their spoken language was studied by Italian merchants, Franciscans, and German monks.²⁵⁶ Over several decades, these Germans and Italians compiled the *Codex Cumanicus*, which contains a lengthy Low Latin-Persian-Cuman Turkish dictionary and a grammatical overview with a Turkish-German lexicon.²⁵⁷ The work is both a practical

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 958.

²⁵⁶ D. N. MacKenzie, "Codex Cumanicus," in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Columbia University Center for Iranian Studies, 2011), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/codex-cumanicus>.

²⁵⁷ There has been some debate regarding the presence of the Persian in the text, with scholars such as Daoud Monchi-Zadeh suggesting that native Cuman speakers had provided the Persian words and their translations, whereas Andras Bodrogligeti has posited that Persian was a lingua franca of mercantile trade throughout the East. In the case of either hypothesis, Cuman speakers were likely familiar with the Persian vocabulary within the text, whether directly through avenues of economic exchange or another form of cross-cultural contact. See Peter B. Golden, "The Codex Cumanicus," in *Central Asian Monuments*, ed. H. B. Paksoy, 33-63. (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1992), 33-63; András J. E. Bodrogligeti, *The*

guide to mercantile communication as well as a tool for missionaries and monks who wanted to convey Christian ideas, such as the Pater Noster, in the Cuman Turkic language.

For our purposes, the codex also contains the words “garib,” “garip,” and “gharīb” in the Persian and Cuman sections, which are translated into Latin as ‘alienus’ and especially as ‘peregrinus.’²⁵⁸ According to Manuela Brito-Martins, ‘peregrinus’ had three meanings for medieval Christian authors: 1) a foreigner on a sojourn abroad, 2) one who goes on a spiritual pilgrimage to a holy site, or 3) the inward journey of a soul toward God.²⁵⁹ While we definitely should not impose the peregrinus’ semantic fields upon the ‘gharīb’ spoken by Cuman speakers,²⁶⁰ it matters that the word was important enough to include in this basic lexicon, whether for mercantile or religious purposes. It is also suggestive that at least for the European compilers of the *Codex Cumanicus*, “gharīb” may have had connotations beyond “foreigner” or “stranger,” but in fact could have conveyed a religious dimension²⁶¹ even within a mercantile capacity. Moreover, as Peter B. Golden has argued, since Cuman Turkish might have served as a Turkic lingua franca across Central Asia, we have room to speculate that the polysemic ‘gharīb’ could

Persian Vocabulary of the Codex Cumanicus. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971); and Louis Ligeti, "Prolegomena to the Codex Cumanicus," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 35, no. 1 (1981): 1-54.

²⁵⁸ *Codex Cumanicus Bibliothecae Ad Templum Divi Marci Venetiarum Primum Ex Integro Edidit Prolegomenis Notis Et Compluribus Glossariis Instruxit Comes Géza Kuun*, ed. Géza Kuun (Budapest: editio Scient. acadamae hung., 1880), 273; 320; 375.

²⁵⁹ Manuela Brito-Martins, "The Concept of *peregrinatio* in Saint Augustine and Its Influences," in *Exile in the Middle Ages: Selected Proceedings from the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 8-11 July 2002*, Laura Napran and Elisabeth M. C. Van Houts, eds., (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 85.

²⁶⁰ The *Codex Cumanicus* itself was written by non-native speakers of Cuman, and as Peter B. Golden points out, it contains many orthographic and grammatical errors.

²⁶¹ Or, conversely, that those Italian / Franciscan / German compilers of the manuscript hoped *they* could convey a religious meaning through a word Cuman speakers already knew.

have traveled quite far across both Eastern Europe and Central Asia in a mercantile and religious capacity before it made its *literary* appearance in Rūm.²⁶²

In other words, while the emergence of the *garīb* in Anatolian Turkish literature begins essentially with the emergence of Anatolian Turkish as a literary language, that does not mean that the concept of the Turkish ‘*garīb*’ had a literary genesis, configured only on the page or in the minds of authors such as Rūmī or Solṭān Valad, or that it entered the Turkish lexicon at the same time when different figures began to configure the Turkish language as literary in Rūm.²⁶³ Certainly, as the *Codex Cumanicus* suggests, it seems possible that the early authors of Turkish literature in Rūm employed the *garīb* in order to shape a concept which had previously taken root in the minds of their audiences, especially at a time of great demographic upheaval and migration, when the presence and movement of strangers within and across Rūm was an everyday facet of life. Because ‘*Āṣīk Paşa* attempted to make the *Garīb-nāme* both easily accessible to Turkish audiences, but also widely competitive (and therefore, authoritative and legitimate) within the greater Islamic world, it stands to reason that he would choose to appropriate and reinterpret a conceptual language which already existed within Arabic, Persian, and

²⁶² Interestingly, the *Codex Cumanicus* was not the only manuscript of its time which suggests so many different forms of social, political, and economic contact between so many different peoples. One of the most intriguing of these manuscripts is the *Rasulid Hexaglot*, which was written for the king of Yemen during the 1360s, and contains Armenian, Arabic, Persian, Mongol, Oghuz Turkish and Qipchak Turkish dialects. The fact that such a work was necessary to produce again speaks volumes about the multifaceted relationships that the king of Yemen had with others within and beyond his sovereign territory.

²⁶³ There are probably at least three ways in which the ‘*gharīb*’ entered the Turkish literature, arguably in part helping Anatolian Turkish to become a literary language through greater practices of appropriating the conventions, forms, and figures of other literary languages. First, Turkish speakers broadly encountered Persians and Arabs over a long period of time, which established in part the adoption of a new literary vocabulary. Second, when Turkish speakers began to convert to Islam, they encountered a new spectrum of canonical texts and literary conventions of the literary languages of Islam, including scriptural traditions such as the enigmatic ḥadīth, “Islam began as a *gharīb*.” Finally, as I have argued throughout this chapter, specific authors actively appropriated and reinterpreted the figure of the *gharīb* for new audiences, which again was part of a larger strategy to legitimize Turkish as a literary language and foster new religious communities in tandem.

Turkish, even if those languages each revealed the meaning behind the “outer signs” of words differently. As we will see in the next section, there is additional evidence to suggest that the ‘gharīb’ had made its way into both Turkish oral cultures and literary production in Rūm by this time as well.

Hence, I would posit that the figure of the ‘garīb’ is not merely translated from Arabic and Persian *literature* into Turkish; we are not merely seeing a ‘stronger’ cultural form, which as Cemal Kafadar points out is usually represented as a ‘masculine’ culture, imprinting itself upon a weaker or ‘feminine’ culture. I have rather argued that we ought to view the *Garīb-nāme* as a negotiation between local Turkish speaking audiences and the translocal Arabic and Persian literary world over who has the right to claim literary authority—in other words, over who has the right to shape new religious communities to participate within both local and translocal realms of literary production. Furthermore, I have suggested that the kinds of appropriations which bridge these local and translocal worlds ultimately blended literary figures which were competitive in the greater spheres of ‘Islamic’ literary production, and as the *Codex Cumanicus* suggests, in part familiar within different Turkish-speaking communities as well.

To investigate the relationships between Persian, Arabic, and Turkish ‘gharībs’ (and consequently, between the greater literary languages of which the gharīb is only a single element), we are forced to move away from reductive frameworks that require us to envision the retroactive beginning of national literatures in terms of what is ‘authentic’ and ‘reductive’ or ‘native’ and ‘foreign.’ When we move beyond these limiting frameworks, the contours of more complicated and dynamic relationships emerge not only across such ‘national’ literatures, but also within a single literary tradition. To that

end, in the next section, I will further build upon the argument I present here: ‘Āşık Paşa was not passively ‘influenced’ by an inauthentic (read: non-Turkic) and alien culture, but rather he actively appropriated the primary literary mechanisms of other literary languages in order to present the case that literary Turkish could become a competitive language within the greater Islamic world, albeit among different communities. I will also further the case that the Turkish ‘garīb’ had already begun to take popular root in Rūm at this time when authors such as ‘Āşık Paşa had begun to configure such concepts within a specifically Şūfī and Islamic orientation.

Finally, in the next section, I will further my argument that ‘Āşık Paşa was not alone in pursuing this strategy of appropriating and reinterpreting the poetics of other literary languages, but rather this practice of literary and social appropriation was part of a greater culture of literary production in Rūm. In so doing, I will posit that even authors who were supposedly ‘popular,’ and not learned like ‘Āşık Paşa (and therefore influenced by Arabic and Persian literary cultures), likewise were invested in this very practice. Although scholars have paradoxically upheld Yūnus Emre as the pinnacle of the nationalist Turkish spirit, as well as the forerunner for a kind of universal proto-humanism, I will argue that in analyzing the configuration of early Turkish literature in Rūm through the eyes of the garīb, which allows us to peer beyond rigid dichotomies, we can shift this conversation towards more fruitful ends.

5. Beyond Authentic and Influenced: Yūnus Emre’s Appropriation of the Gharīb

In this section, I present my final case study of literary appropriation and reinterpretation as a means of legitimizing one's own spiritual authority, language of communication, and religious community. In early Turkish literary history, Yūnus Emre, the focus of this case study, is frequently depicted as the polar opposite of 'Āşık Paşa, as I will demonstrate here. Whereas scholars have often characterized literary endeavors such as the *Garīb-nāme* in terms of taklid [Pers. *taqlīd*], or a kind of passive mimicry, of supposedly 'high' Persian and Arabic literary cultures, those same scholars have held up Yūnus Emre as the exemplar of an independent, popular Turkish spirit. However, as I will argue in this final section, like 'Āşık Paşa, Yūnus Emre likewise pursued a similar strategy of appropriating and reinterpreting the literary conventions of Arabic and Persian, and he furthermore did so in order to articulate his own spiritual authority in ways which would resonate with local Turkish communities. While Yūnus Emre did compose many of his devotional hymns in syllabic meter as opposed to 'arūz, I join other scholars such as Zekeriya Başkal and Mustafa Tatçı in arguing that Yūnus Emre was still actively engaged in the greater theological currents of Rūm in particular, and Şūfī communities even beyond Rūm in general.

However, the appropriation of Yūnus Emre *himself* as an exemplar of unadulterated Turkishness has a long and storied history, a small part of which merits our attention here, as it relates to the twin problems we investigated earlier: how to characterize 'appropriation' across literary languages, and how this alters what we think of as authentically 'Turkish.' This history goes back at least until 1918, a few years before the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic and the implementation of Atatürk's westernizing reforms, when Mehmed Fuad Köprülü published his pioneering

study *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, or *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, which was to become one of the most influential works on both the Yasawī Şūfī tradition and the life of Yūnus Emre for the next ninety years. Devin DeWeese has noted that for better or worse, Köprülü's work underlies nearly every study on Turkish Şūfīsm or early Anatolian Turkish literature ever since.

For Köprülü, Yūnus Emre possessed a form of “genius” that was “also completely Turkish” and “completely national.”²⁶⁴ This genius, Köprülü argues, is the result of the synthesis of Islamic Neoplatonism, which “gave Yūnus Emre his mystical and ethical principles,” and the “Turkish popular element” which provided “his language, style, meter, and verse-form.”²⁶⁵ Köprülü argues that this synthesis expressed the Turkish spirit so purely that echoes of Yūnus’ devotional hymns [modern Turkish: *ilahi*; Persian: *elāhī*] resound even through the nationalism of Ziya Gökalp. Along this line of reasoning, while authors such as ‘Āşık Paşa represented an attempt to artfully (and hence, artificially) mimic the literary production of high Arabic and Persian culture, Yūnus Emre represented the authentically Turkish oral traditions of the people, drawing on a ‘traditional’ Turkic syllabic meter. According to Köprülü, while these oral traditions are lost to us today, they undoubtedly connected the Anatolian Turkish people both with their pre-Islamic past and with their Turkish origins in Central Asia. As Köprülü puts it:

In order to understand the [Turkish] national spirit and taste in Muslim Turkish literature, the period most worthy of study is that of the great mystics who spoke to the masses using the popular language and meter and whose works have endured for centuries. One must distinguish this popular Şūfī literature, which was clearly related to the pre-Islamic folk literature, from the abundant and artful

²⁶⁴ Köprülü, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, 322.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 322.

compositions that Turkish poets — [poets] who translated, and skillfully and enthusiastically imitated, the Şūfī works of the Persians — wrote in the ‘arūd meter and most often in pompous language.²⁶⁶

But here, a paradox emerges in Köprülü’s categorization of early Turkish literature across the binaries of native/foreign, popular/refined, and Turkish/Persian. This paradox can be outlined as follows: the works of Yūnus Emre and Aḥmad Yasawī of Central Asia “could compare with the most sublime Persian mystical compositions,” despite the fact that these works are “so characteristically Turkish that nothing like it is found among the Arabs and Persians.”²⁶⁷ They are both equivalent and incomparable, in other words. In this concluding section of chapter two, I will offer the counter suggestion: these Persian and Turkish works are both inequivalent — that is, partially conditioned by differing cultural, social, and linguistic factors — *and* comparable insofar as they connectively and competitively appropriated and reinterpreted various literary conventions for different reasons, which we can see in particular through the figure of the gharīb.

From a linguistic and nationalist standpoint, scholars such as Sait Hurşid and Zekeriya Başkal have begun to rethink Köprülü’s characterization of Yūnus Emre. For, while Köprülü maintained that Yūnus Emre wrote in “pure Anatolian Turkish,”²⁶⁸ Hurşid has since demonstrated that 49 percent of Yūnus Emre’s lexicon in his poetry is Persian

²⁶⁶ For Köprülü, the binary between Turkish authors who imitated Persian literature and Turkish authors who spoke with the authentic voice of the people was not an exclusively academic problem. In his opinion, the problem of foreign influence had come to a cultural and political boiling point by the 20th century: “Because we [Turks] forgot our distinctive national character in the middle ages under Persian influence and, since the Tanzimat [the Ottoman reform movement between 1839 and 1878], under European influence, popular Şūfī literature, like everything related to, or derived from, the people, has been neglected, even regarded with contempt.” *Ibid.*, lii.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, liii.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 304.

or Arabic in origin.²⁶⁹ Başkal has gone even further in this regard, outlining three separate categories into which scholars of early Turkish literature generally sort Yūnus Emre: as a nationalist, a humanist, or a practitioner of ‘heterodox’ Islam steeped in Zoroastrianism and Christianity.²⁷⁰ In illuminating the politics that underly these categories, Başkal rightly argues in his astute dissertation, “Claiming Yūnus Emre: Historical Context and the Politics of Reception,” that Yūnus Emre should not be considered a lone figure, a “wandering dervish without a clear purpose.²⁷¹” Rather, Başkal positions Yūnus Emre more firmly within the spheres of Persian and Arabic literary production at the time, suggesting that Yūnus Emre rather sought to present Şūfī discourses to both illiterate and literate Turkish speakers alike.²⁷²

Even so, Başkal posits that “the only difference between the *Maşnavī* by Rūmī and *Risalatūn Nushiyye*, the work of Yūnus Emre, in the same meter and genre, is the

²⁶⁹ See Sait Hurşid, *La Langue De Yunus Emre: Contribution À L'histoire Du Turc Pre-Ottoman* (Ankara: Ministère de la culture, 1991).

²⁷⁰ Başkal also has a fourth category of what might be termed miscellaneous interpretations which do not reflect general viewpoints in studies on Yūnus Emre. See Zekeriya Başkal, “Claiming Yunus Emre: Historical Contexts and the Politics of Reception,” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004), 7.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

²⁷² It’s not surprising that so many scholars have characterized Yūnus Emre so diversely. In some ways, Yūnus Emre is something of a Turkish Sappho: what little we know about the poet’s life has been culled, somewhat problematically, from the poet’s own works. Even more troubling, none of the manuscripts which contain Yūnus Emre’s *Dīvān* can be dated to the 13th century, which is when the majority of scholars argue Yūnus Emre lived, although there have been dissenting opinions which place his death a century after that, and certainly many authors have claimed to be “Yūnus Emre” in subsequent periods. It is difficult to pin the poet down to anything but an extremely general region and time period, even if we discount those poems which were initially attributed to Yūnus Emre, but can now be considered more suspect in terms of authorship. Like Sappho herself, the extreme dearth of information on Yūnus Emre has led many scholars to read their own preconceptions into the poet’s life and work, such as the notion that ‘popular’ Turkish literature is entirely “pure” of foreign influence, or that oral literary cultures are more proto-nationally ‘authentic’ than written ones. This problem is amplified by the importance assigned to Yūnus Emre, rightly or wrongly, as the first or nearly first poet of ‘vernacular’ literary Turkish in Anatolia, the language of the people, which makes him not only a representative of a supposed popular literary tradition, but in many ways its forerunner and exemplar. Conversely, there has been much less popular and scholarly interest in the person of the supposedly more cultured ‘Āşık Paşa, who is hardly ever held up as a representative of that elusive category, ‘Turkishness.’

language used in these two works.”²⁷³ Although speculations might be made about Yūnus Emre’s life from his poetry, moving beyond speculation remains an extremely problematic affair.²⁷⁴ This study does not find it useful to attempt such a reconstruction of biographical detail where definite conclusions cannot be drawn, but instead seeks to examine how in particular Yūnus Emre appropriated and reinterpreted similar literary conventions in Arabic and Persian as did Rūmī himself, in effect participating within this greater culture of literary appropriation within Rūm in general. To this end, in my analysis of how Yūnus Emre appropriated the figure of the *garīb* in particular, it would run contrary to my purpose to take the assumption that the “only difference” between Rūmī and Yūnus is “language” at face value, despite the many substantial similarities between the two authors. Rather, as I have argued throughout the first chapter and this chapter, religious figures such as Rūmī, Solṭān Valad, ‘Āṣiḳ Paşa, and Yūnus Emre all pursued similar literary strategies of appropriating and reinterpreting the formal conventions of other literary languages, which they then incorporated with more localized and popular literary forms and figures, in order to better shape their own religious and literary communities.

²⁷³ Başkal, “Claiming Yūnus Emre,” 28.

²⁷⁴ It is certainly true that Rūmī and Yūnus Emre shared some of the same Neoplatonic and Aristotelian underpinnings in their practices of Islam. Due to the lack of distinctive points in doctrine or mention of contemporary events that might place Yūnus Emre in a particular location or Şūfī tradition, there has been much debate as to whether Yūnus Emre belonged to the Bektāşī Şūfī order or the so-called Melāmī-Qalandarī order. One approach has been to identify a figure that appears in Yūnus Emre’s poetry, Barak Baba, with a shaykh of the same name in the Melāmī ‘order,’ although Başkal and others have rightly cautioned against placing too much importance on the ‘Melāmī’ as an institution, as it may have been an important “umbrella concept” arching over a variety of Şūfī brotherhoods and communities. Ibn ‘Arabī, for example, noted that the Melāmīs, or people of blame, do not distinguish themselves from the common people in the markets in any way, preferring to identify themselves as “*faqīr*,” or poor, and so consequently aim to remain unknown. (See William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), 373.) In addition, Melāmīs seem to have traveled widely, which is a theme that appears in Yūnus Emre’s poetry, although not in any way that would distinguish Yūnus Emre’s “wandering” [*seyr*] from any other mode of travel that was extremely common during this time period, within Islam or external to it.

We can now ask how Yūnus Emre understood and appropriated the figure of the *garīb*. Between his *Dīwan* and a single larger didactic poem, *Risalatün Nushiyye*, about 416 poems make up Yūnus' oeuvre.²⁷⁵ While it is true that Yūnus composed his major didactic work, *Risalatün Nushiyye*, in the *masnavī* genre of Arabic poetry which typically allows for a plethora of speakers and voices to emerge from a series of rhyming hemstitches, the poems in Yūnus' *Dīwan* are, as mentioned above, *ilahis*, or devotional hymns which would have been sung aloud in small gatherings, and typically adopt a single point of view.²⁷⁶ Of these, the editor of the most recent critical edition of Yūnus' *Dīwan*, Mustafa Tatçı, has suggested that approximately seventy hymns take the transience of life and this world as their subject.²⁷⁷

Within this subset of Yūnus Emre's oeuvre, we find him employing the figure of the *garīb* in many ways. In one poem which can be traced back to seven of the earliest manuscript collections of the *Dīvān*, he begins with the famous declaration:

I came here as a *garīb*, I am weary of this country.
The moment has come - I shall tear down this trap of [my] captivity.²⁷⁸

Yūnus Emre's use of the *garīb* is clearly less abstract than we have seen in the case of 'Āşık Paşa. But what does it mean to arrive as a *garīb*? To begin, we should remember that being a *garīb* is not an intrinsic state; one is only a stranger or strange in relationship to something else. Therefore, it would be fruitful to examine who and what Yūnus Emre

²⁷⁵ Başkal, "Claiming Yūnus Emre," 97.

²⁷⁶ These poems fall under a broader classification of Turkish poetry known as the *yekahank*, which Walter Andrews describes as a poem "which one can clearly say are about something; that is about the prophet, about God, about the bath, etc." See Walter G. Andrews, *An Introduction to Ottoman Poetry* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1976), 140.

²⁷⁷ Yūnus Emre, *Yunus Emre Divāni*, ed. Mustafa Tatçı, vol. 1 (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990).

juxtaposes himself against in order to understand the semantic fields of the ‘garīb’ here, as well as to understand how Yūnus Emre used the concept of the ‘garīb’ to claim a similar authority cultivated by Rūmī, and in a manner that was competitive within literary production in Rūm.

For instance, in the opening line, the word that Yūnus Emre uses for ‘country,’ *il*, also denotes ‘tribe’ or pastoral group, which certainly could have resonated with the formally nomadic Turkish peoples who had settled in Rūm. Hence, the ‘here’ which Yūnus Emre contrasts himself against isn’t necessarily geographic in nature, but like Rūmī’s sermon on western gharībs and eastern invaders in the *Fīthe ma’ fīh*, likely conveyed a distinction between social or even religious groups. The following couplet certainly reinforces this interpretation, as Yūnus Emre states that “I read this book of Love and studied it,” which he contrasts against “the four books,” meaning the Qur’ān and other canonical books revealed to the Abrahamic faiths, allowing him juxtapose his own religious practice against legalistic textual study. This juxtaposition between the ‘garīb’ Yūnus Emre and legalistic religious scholars becomes even more explicit when he subsequently declares:

How can the men of the sharī‘a [religious law] provide a way for me?
I became an osprey in the Sea of Reality, [where] I swim.

Yet, as his appropriation of the word ‘garīb’ in the opening line should alert us, Yūnus Emre’s intention here was not to isolate himself from all other religious practices or literary conventions, despite the fact that he represents himself as a lone stranger. Instead,

²⁷⁸ Yūnus Emre, *Yunus Emre Divānı*, vol. 2, 234-6.

like Rūmī and Solṭān Valad, he rather sought to position himself within a discrete literary framework which he could operate authoritatively within. No where is this more clear than in a subsequent stanza, when he declares that “I am Maṣur al-Ḥallāj [*Mansur’am*]” and that “I have come to the gallows,” referring to one of the most influential moments in the history of Ṣūfīsm, when, in 922, Ḥallāj was executed in Baghdad in part for stating “I am the Truth [*ḥaqq*]²⁷⁹.” By appropriating the story of Ḥallāj, a rather standard topos in Ṣūfī poetry both in Arabic and Persian, Yūnus Emre located himself fairly squarely within conventional ‘Ṣūfī’ discourses on the meaning of true spiritual devotion.

Rather than trying to abolish the formal conventions of Ṣūfī semiotics or Persianate poetics or merely ignoring them, then, Yūnus Emre actively constructed an alternative spiritual genealogy upon which his authority could be grounded, just as Rūmī, Solṭān Valad, and ‘Āṣīḳ Paşa had done.²⁸⁰ Of course, this doesn’t mean that Yūnus Emre wanted his devotional hymns to be interpreted through the lens of a 10th century Arabic-speaking Persian in Baghdad anymore than Rūmī wanted his *Masnavī* to be interpreted through the lens of the Ghaznavid court of Sanā’ī. Rather, the claims to authority which Yūnus Emre made were competitive insofar as others had similarly aligned themselves with Ḥallāj, and consequently the rhetorical language he used to identify himself was recognizable across a broad spectrum of Near Eastern poetics and languages.

However, drawing from the authority of other seminal figures in Ṣūfīsm was not the only way Yūnus Emre sought to establish his own competitive articulation of Islam within this *ilahi* alone. For instance, he also states that the entire meaning of “the four books” of Islam is fulfilled in one stroke of the letter *elif*, which is the initial letter in the

²⁷⁹ Ḥaqq also is one of the names for God, making Ḥallāj’s declaration blasphemous in the eyes of the caliph.

Arabic, Persian, and (subsequent) Ottoman alphabet. While this might appear to be a move away from a kind of legalistic hermeneutics, or even texts themselves, the gesture is competitive to the extent that, as Annemarie Schimmel puts it, “there is scarcely a popular poet in the Muslim world, from Turkey to Indonesia, who has not elaborated this topic, attacking the bookish scholars who forget the true meaning of the most important letter and instead blacken the pages of their learned books.”²⁸¹ Rūmī, ‘Aṭṭār, and Omar Khayyam all attend to the mystical dimension of the letter ‘elif,’ for instance.²⁸² To put this in somewhat different terms, Yūnus Emre arguably made such comparisons between himself and formal “religious jurists” precisely because many other authors were making similar claims in a wide variety of languages. In fact, this juxtaposition was widely recognizable and therefore served as a broadly competitive to make about one’s own spiritual and literary authority.

Hence, despite the fact that Yūnus Emre portrays himself as a ‘garīb’ in order to contrast himself against the “men of the sharī‘a” and legalistic study, he did so rather to enter the spheres of discursive production particular to didactic Ṣūfī literature in Rūm. Claiming to be a garīb was not a claim, then, to being “exceptional, unique, exotic, and

²⁸⁰ In fact, Yūnus Emre mentions Rūmī several times in his *Divan*. Ibid., 58, 64, and 301.

²⁸¹ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 418.

²⁸² Because Turkish speakers had entered into the Arabo-Persian ‘scriptworld’ by adopting the same alphabet, one implication here, if we cautiously read between the lines of a broadly used trope, is that the higher meaning of the “four books” can also be revealed to Turkish speakers who had recently appropriated the ‘elif’ as their own. David Damrosch has similarly attended to the ways in which adopting a new script can connect otherwise disparate literary traditions. As Damrosch notes, “Scripts may illustrate the classic Sapir-Whorf hypothesis better than language does: writing systems profoundly shape the thought world of those who employ them, not for ontological reasons grounded in the sign system as such but because scripts are never learned in a vacuum. Instead, a writing system is often the centerpiece of a program of education and employment, and in learning a script one absorbs key elements of a broad literary history: its terms of reference, habits of style, and poetics, often transcending those of any one language or country.” See David Damrosch, “Scriptworlds: Writing Systems and the Formation of World Literature,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (2007): 200.

somehow detached from world history,”²⁸³ to borrow a phrase from historian John F. Richards, but rather was arguably a move to shape an analogous literary and spiritual authority which authors such as Rūmī, Solṭān Valad, and ‘Āşık Paşa were also constructing. However, while the figure of the garīb would have been recognizable across many of these literary conventions, that does not mean that it was always deployed in the same way, or that there is no difference between Yūnus Emre and these other authors.

While ‘Āşık Paşa uses the ‘garīb’ as an epistemic and connective figure which signifies “meaning” from elsewhere, Yūnus Emre brings the garīb back to the level of individual people and communities, and does so in a striking way. Notably, while Rūmī’s followers often called him a gharīb, nowhere does he explicitly claim this designation for himself, despite the fact that he clearly believes gharībs possess the original authority of Islam. In contradistinction, Yūnus Emre explicitly names himself as a garīb in five separate works in his *Dīvān*.²⁸⁴ What’s more, he does so not only to distinguish himself from “men of the sharī‘a” and hence to appropriate the authoritative framework of other mystical Islamic discourses in Rūm, but he also couches the gharīb in the language of social dispersion characteristic of this general period. One of his most frequently quoted poems utilizes this very language of travel and dispersion in order to represent the figure of the garīb:

I wonder, in this place, could there be a garīb like me [*şöyle garīb bencileyin*]?
A broken hearted, weepy-eyed one, such a garīb like me?

I passed through Rūm [Urum] and Damascus, all the northern lands,

²⁸³ John F. Richards, "Early Modern India and World History," *Journal of World History* 8, no. 2 (1997): 197.

²⁸⁴ Yūnus Emre. *Yunus Emre Divanı*, vol 2, 486; 493; 234; 263; 361.

I searched [diligently], but I found no such garīb like me.

May no one be a garīb. May no one burn in the fire of longing.
My Master [Hocam], may no one be such a garīb like me.

My tongue speaks, my eyes weep, my core grieves for garībs.
Perhaps my star in heaven is such a garīb like me.

How long shall I burn with this pain— till death come one day and I die?
Perhaps in my grave I'll find such a garīb like me.

May they say that a garīb died, may they come to know it three days later.
May they wash, with cold water, such a garīb like me.

Hey, my Emre, cure-less Yūnus. A cure can't be found for his pain.
Come now, go from city to city, such a garīb like me.²⁸⁵

Perhaps no work goes further to build on Yūnus Emre's reputation as a lone, wandering dervish than this one, as it paints the bleak life of a destitute wanderer on a slow circuit from town to town, empire to empire. But how closely should we read representation into reality? Rather than understand this poem as an autobiographical statement, this study finds it useful to ask how the figure of the garīb might be more discursively connective than its representation here implies.

First, although the garīb in the poem has wandered far and wide, his wandering is not the random flight of a person with nowhere to go. More than anything else, the garīb isn't looking for a home or a homeland, but rather seeks another garīb. Given the widespread scope of social dispersion from the 13th-15th centuries in Rūm, one might think that finding another garīb would not be so difficult as the poem implies, were the poem truly about the phenomenon of exile or displacement.

Mustafa Tatçı takes a similar position in his interpretation of the poem. Noting that “the world is exile [*gurbet*],” he argues that *garīb*s are those “beings who are torn from the realm of the spirits, far from their source.”²⁸⁶ We can further support this interpretation by observing that Yūnus Emre addresses a certain “*hoca*,” or master, in the poem, which elsewhere in his *Dīvān* refers to both the Prophet and to God.²⁸⁷ Since we also know that Yūnus Emre used the *garīb* to juxtapose himself against different theological positions, or even against this material world, it seems probable that the figure of the *garīb* similarly conveys a particular spiritual orientation that renders one homeless, rootless, and restless in this world.

If this interpretation is correct, then Yūnus Emre’s ‘*garīb*’ is somewhat similar to Rūmī’s tale of the *gharīb* gazelle who falls in among worldly donkeys. In both cases, the *gharīb* / *garīb* is trapped and becomes ill when forced to live with those “not of your own kind,” as Rūmī says, which includes those who do not understand “meaning,” or true knowledge of Islam.²⁸⁸ Yet, whereas Rūmī’s final point is that the *gharīb* gazelle is essentially a figure for the Prophet Moḥammad, who was the first *gharīb* amongst the worldly non-believers, Yūnus Emre claims that he has found no *garīb* like himself. In this broad sense, Yūnus Emre made a larger claim about his own authority than did Rūmī, who was only labeled a *gharīb* by his own followers.²⁸⁹

This brings us to the final and most important point about how adaptation complicates the boundaries between literary languages instead of merely signifying a

²⁸⁵ Ibid., vol. 2, 361.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., vol 1, 550.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., vol 1, 560-61.

²⁸⁸ Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Maṣnavī-ye Ma‘navī*, ed. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, vol. 3 (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1984), 54.

²⁸⁹ However, while Yūnus Emre does not encounter other *garīb*s like himself, he acknowledges that they must exist, as he grieves for all true *garīb*s who are similarly parted from God.

reductive form of mimicry. We noted earlier that ‘Āşık Paşa asserted “the [outer] surface of [these] higher meanings” — the words that make up any given language — “is not hidden from sight²⁹⁰,” allowing different languages to point towards the same neoplatonic reality in different ways. Similarly, we might say that the rhetorical language in which Rūmī and ‘Āşık Paşa chose to dress their *garībs* matters a great deal, even if those *gharībs* ultimately signify an extremely similar concept.

In this case, Yūnus Emre’s poem is couched in the language of social displacement and exile rather than actually representative of exile. This *garīb* is “broken-hearted, weepy-eyed;” he prays his state befalls no one else; his heart burns painfully for something distant; and he seems destined for an anonymous death, his body to be washed and buried by strangers. The most basic message here is that true lovers of God simply cannot call this world their home. However, while Rūmī used the *gharīb* gazelle as an analogy for the Prophet Moḥammad, here Yūnus Emre employed the subjective experiences of wandering dervishes as an analogy for the subjectivity of true *garībs*, who are cut off from God in this life.²⁹¹ Of course, this does not mean that ‘Yūnus Emre’ did

²⁹⁰ ‘Āşık Paşa, *Garīb-nāme*, vol. 4, 956.

²⁹¹ Much later in the 15th century, the travel of dervishes acquired an explicitly disciplinary character for some Persian spiritual and chivalric brotherhoods, or *futuwwas*. In his 15th century manual on chivalric brotherhoods, for example, the polymath Ḥosayn Vā‘ez Kāshefī, who was born in Sabzivar in northeastern Iran, posits travel as the fundamental human activity. “Since it is clear that the task of man is to travel,” Kāshefī states, “either in the illusory world of appearances or the world of spiritual reality, then he must observe the rules of travel in order to give his just due at each stage” because “travel is the tutor of man and the threshold of dignity,” and that “the acquisition of knowledge [...] is best done through travel.”

He further defines beneficial travel as the circulation of dervishes between the graves of the prophets, saints, and great ones, the disciplining of the carnal self, and witnessing with one’s own eyes the “luminaries of the age” as well as attending “to people on the way of God.” He develops this thought by further specifying the kind of knowledge that travel produces, as one of the benefits of travel is “seeing the different customs of each people and sect, and learning from them.” However, being able to participate in such discourse does not come without a cost, as dialogue with others from “different customs” require separation from “one’s companions, brothers, and family,” a fact which is “extremely hard for the carnal soul.” This distancing from a familial support structure requires the self-imposed exile to develop a large degree of self-discipline. Only after one’s body and mind has properly weathered such separation, one is able to appreciate “the kindness of strangers,” as well as witness “the wonders of creation and the works of God,” which increase the comprehension of God’s Power. Kāshefī, Ḥosayn Vā‘ez, *The Royal Book of*

not experience traveling throughout Rūm as a garīb, or that he was necessarily advocating the kind of radical homelessness he describes here. What matters, I would argue, is to what extent these different representations of the gharīb/garīb had currency among various interpretive communities in Rūm.

To that end, it is important to understand to what extent Yūnus' appropriation and reinterpretation of the garīb may have resonated with his audiences beyond the fact that figures like Rūmī, Solṭān Valad, and 'Āşīk Paşa also used this term in slightly different ways. Turkish may have appeared as a literary language in Rūm at the end of the 13th century, but Turkish speakers certainly had their own oral literary traditions which they brought to Rūm and developed there throughout the Saljūq's reign. Of course, we have limited access to those cultures today, except insofar as authors inscribed and modified aspects of such traditions when the language became a written one. For some scholars and nationalists, our lack of knowledge has been somewhat freeing: like Yūnus Emre himself, since we know so little about these oral literatures, they have become Rorschach tests for our own modern assumptions and prejudices. For instance, one of Köprülü's main reasons for writing *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature* was to posit Yūnus Emre as someone who voiced the true spirit of the Turkish people; an oral tradition which was not only pan-Turkic and free of foreign corruption, but which has survived until this present day.

Just because we might no longer frame Köprülü's hypothesis around such rigid and impermeable cultural dichotomies does not mean that Yūnus Emre, or the authors claiming to be him, did not similarly attempt to ground their appropriations from other

Spiritual Chivalry, trans. Jay R. Crook (Chicago, IL: Great Books of the Islamic World, Inc., 2000), 233-236.

literary languages and Şūfī discourses in a resonant and easily accessible manner for their Turkish-speaking audiences. In fact, there are considerable grounds to posit that the figure of the *garīb* in particular would have found a receptive audience in a variety of Turkish communities at this period in time. Significantly, just as Yūnus Emre wrote a large body of *ilahis* on the subject of travel and the transience of life on earth, an oral Turkic idiom likewise took dispersion and travel as one of its major tropes and topoi. For example, *The Book of Dede Korkut*, a collection of oral stories about the Oghuz Turkic people which was reportedly written down in the 14th century for the first time (the earliest extant copies date to the 16th century, however), depicts migration, travel, and exile as one of its primary themes,²⁹² as these tales unfold against the westward movement of Turkic peoples from Central Asia.

There are other reasons to suspect that the figure of the *gharīb* could have resonated and been easily comprehensible with Yūnus Emre's audience besides the fact that 'travel' and 'estrangement' were likely important, if not major, themes within Turkic oral culture(s). We know, for instance, that Alp Arslān encouraged the Saljūq elite to consider themselves as "strangers" in a foreign land in the 11th century. We also know from texts such as the Codex Cumanicus that the concept of the 'gharīb' or 'garīb' was used at least by mercantile communities across Central Asia and even Europe. More relevant to the oral and literary landscape of Rūm in the 14th century during the decline of

²⁹² Warren Walker and many other scholars have similarly noted the prominence of the theme of migration and exile in the *Book of Dede Korkut*: "Beneath its episodes of love, war, internecine struggle, and interface with the world of the supernatural lies its unifying theme of migration: physical movement from Central Asia to the Caucasus and Middle East, religious progression from animism toward Islam, and the cultural journey from open-range tent life of the steppes to the more structured existence of permanent settlements and solid buildings. The trip takes centuries, and both story and text are as errant as the quasi-historical scenario." Warren Walker, "Triple-Tiered Migration in the Book of Dede Korkut," in *The Literature of Emigration and Exile*, eds. James Whitlark and Wendell M. Aycock (Lubbock.: Texas Tech University Press, 1992), 23.

Saljūq rule, however, is the figure of the *garīb* in the popular *maṣnavī* *Varqa ve Gülşah* [*Varqa va Golshāh*], which was possibly composed in Konya, as A. R. I. Koyunoğlu has posited.²⁹³ This *maṣnavī* was composed by Yūsof-e Meddāḥ, which means something along the lines of “Yūsof, the public story-teller,” and it seems this *maṣnavī* was likely recited aloud and probably circulated throughout Rūm via public story-tellers like Yūsof.²⁹⁴

As in many examples of appropriation we have hitherto examined, the tale of *Varqa ve Gülşah* was also modeled off a preexisting variant in Persian, *Varqa Va Golshāh*, written for the Ghaznavids in the 11th century by a certain poet named ‘Ayyūqī, who claims that he based *his* tale off another preexistent variant which was told by the Arabs.²⁹⁵ Most importantly for our purposes, however, is that the hero of the story, a youth named Varqa, appeals to the mercy of the Sultan of Syria by claiming to be a ‘*garīb*.’ In the tale, Varqa tells the Sultan that he was attacked by a band of forty brigands, whom he slew in battle before falling unconscious. Varqa throws himself on the mercy of the Sultan, noting that “as for the rest, I am a stranger in this place this moment. That is my state; I don’t know what this place is.” The Sultan responds immediately by demanding they honor this stranger, even declaring “may my soul be scarified for this stranger [*garībe*]” twice in the text.²⁹⁶ In short, by claiming to be a stranger to the Sultan, this ‘*garīb*’ was not making a claim to authority, but rather a claim to *hospitality*, for one

²⁹³ The author of the romance, Yūsof-e Meddāḥ, at the least mentions his devotion to Rūmī in line 1604.

²⁹⁴ The work’s translator into English, Grace Martin Smith, also considered the tale to be “ideally suited to be part of the repertory of an itinerant Anatolian story teller, whose audience, especially if it contained border warriors, would have been eager to hear such tales of battles and adventures.” See Yūsof-e Meddāḥ, *Varqa ve Gülşah: A Fourteenth Century Anatolian Turkish Mesnevi*, trans. Grace Martin Smith (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 7.

²⁹⁵ The oldest manuscript in Persian of ‘Ayyūqī’s work (c. 1250) was probably a product of the Saljūqs themselves, and is currently kept in the Topkapı Palace library (hazine 841).

must treat ‘garībs’ well, since they are generally friendless, alone, and penniless. Although the functions of *Varqa ve Gülşah* and the *ilahis* of Yūnus Emre are quite different, both draw from a similar notion that garībs are utterly adrift in this world. The difference, of course, is that whereas Yūnus Emre draws upon this generalized understanding of ‘garībs’ in order to explain his spiritual position in this world, as the true lovers of God are likewise alienated and destitute, the hero of *Varqa ve Gülşah* implies a similar understanding of ‘garībs’ existed on a decidedly more social register. Garībs are those who have been separated from their true ‘homeland,’ as Solṭān Valad stated in the introduction to the *Rabāb-nāma*, and this seems to be widely understood regardless of whether that ‘homeland’ was conceptualized as Paradise or as one’s distant, worldly residence.

While I do not wish to imply that Yūnus Emre used a variant of *Varqa ve Gülşah* as a potential thematic or literary source, it is significant that other similarly ‘connective’ gharībs between Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literature were likewise circulating through oral performance in Rūm during this period in time, when migration and displacement were not only facts of life, but also constituted certain dimensions of oral Turkic culture as well as popular tales which had been appropriated into Turkish. What matters is not only that both concepts of the garīb in Turkish are predicated upon this similar understanding of homeless, displaced ‘strangers,’ but also that these different valences of the ‘garīb’ in Turkish likewise cut across ‘high’ and ‘low’ social strata, ‘oral’ performance and ‘textual’ composition, as well as ‘Arabic,’ ‘Persian,’ and ‘Turkish’ cultures. In fact, as we will see in the next chapter, a popular romance circulating in Armenian during this time, titled the *History of the Youth Farman*, similarly featured

²⁹⁶ See Yūsof-e Meddāh, *Varqa ve Gülşah*, 166-168.

gharībs appealing to the mercy of kings, and likewise implicated a complicated relationship between multiple literary languages, indicating that this understanding of gharībs was rooted in more than one ethnic group, form of religious expression, or even language.

In this context, it's not surprising why the figure of the gharīb might appeal to Yūnus Emre, or why Yūnus Emre's *ilahis* about living as a wandering and lone gharib continued to resonate popularly with a diverse audience throughout the middle ages and even the modern period. The gharīb, that perennially wandering stranger, arguably appears at the dawn of Turkish letters in Rūm because it was capable of negotiating a place among a multiplicity of languages and literary conventions, new and old. Some of those conventions were culled from Arabic and Persianate discourses on gharībs in Rūm, and others from the Turkic oral tradition(s) which had good reason to be concerned with the problem of displacement, migration, and estrangement. While the gharib only represents one dimension of the greater relationships between Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literatures at this moment in time, it is reflective of those greater relationships insofar as the early adopters of the Turkish garīb were also tasked with navigating an entry point within a Persianate literary sphere which would both legitimize their own literary production as well as resonate clearly with their Turkish-speaking audiences. After all, those audiences might have found these discourses exceedingly 'strange' had these authors made no attempt to communicate in ways which, at some basic level, were already comprehensible and even familiar.

Therefore, while there are important differences between the figures and literary production of Yūnus Emre and 'Āşık Paşa, they were both part of a similar process of

adapting the literary conventions and even semiotics of other literary languages, and reinterpreting those conventions in resonant, authoritative ways. Arguably, while the literary forms that these authors created were not the same, both labored to engage broadly with theological discussions that were ongoing in Şūfism across the Islamic world. Furthermore, both authors appropriated the literary conventions of those discussions and reinterpreted them for Turkish-speaking audiences in more accessible terms.

In this final case study, I have argued that Yūnus Emre pursued a strategy of adapting different Arabic and Persian literary conventions and discourses, which he reinterpreted for a Turkish-speaking audience by employing a popular syllabic meter. Furthermore, Yūnus Emre did so in part by choosing subject material which could have been culturally relevant and resonant with his target audiences. In comparison with Solţān Valad, who likewise used easily accessible marketplace vocabulary in Turkish to present the teachings of Rūmī in the meter of the *Maşnavī*, the overall strategy behind Yūnus Emre's production of devotional hymns and his own *maşnavī* was highly similar. In both cases, various acts of appropriation and adaptation sought to combine different social and literary 'vocabularies,' which each intersected in the figure of the *gharīb*, in order to better foster particular religious communities through an active configuration of Turkish as an authoritative language within the realm of Islam.

Conclusion: Literary Language and Community

In this chapter, I have examined how the early authors of Turkish as a literary language in Rūm each pursued a similar strategy of literary appropriation and reinterpretation. These authors wove together both ‘high’ and ‘low’ literary forms, often from multiple literary languages and even social strata.

Nor were they alone in this practice. As I argued in chapter one, Rūmī also appropriated a wide breadth of bawdy and popular literary forms in Arabic and Persian which he then infused with the ‘higher meaning’ of his own exegeses. As I have shown, he did so in order to reverse the expectations of his more learned audience that higher truths cannot be revealed in mundane, secular discourses. He also did so because he was highly sensitive to the predilections and dispositions of his local audiences, and he wanted to communicate those truths in a way which people could already understand.

Similarly, in this chapter, I argued that Solṭān Valad adopted and intensified the scope of this practice, which essentially involved appropriating and reinterpreting a variety of literary forms, figures, and conventions in order to meet the needs of a new audience in a widely competitive manner. Not only did Solṭān Valad write some of the first Turkish poetry in Rūm in the metrical system of ‘arūz, hence addressing the skeptics of Turkish as a literary language, but he also employed marketplace vocabulary culled from quotidian life in order to better communicate with actual Turkish speakers. What’s more, Solṭān Valad brought together these ‘popular’ and ‘cultured’ literary conventions not only using Turkish, but also Greek.

‘Āşık Paşa likewise pursued this same practice of appropriation, albeit for a monolingual audience, in his own attempt to reveal higher “meanings” to Turkish speaking communities who could not understand the twin languages of Islam, Arabic or Turkish. Despite this, he still heavily appropriated and reinterpreted Arabic and Persian literary conventions and forms, which he did in part to present the argument that Turkish could be a literary language. As we have seen, the central figure of the *Garīb-nāme* was in fact the figure of the garīb, which ‘Āşık Paşa argued came from a higher metaphysical plane—the realm of God—and therefore was not entirely ‘native’ to either Arabic or Persian literary production. In so doing, he presented the case that “no language is able to put a seal on meaning,” because meaning itself (i.e., the spiritual secrets unveiled by theology) is a stranger in *any* language, but especially within the Turkish language.

Somewhat ingeniously, by appropriating the figure of the garīb from Arabic and Persian literary conventions and theological discourses, ‘Āşık Paşa presented an argument that no literary language can have a monopoly on ‘meaning,’ and consequently anyone has a right to negotiate access to ‘meaning’ on a literary level. At the same time, of course, he employed those very appropriations from Arabic and Persian poetics in order to configure Turkish language *as* literary, which allowed him to take part in these larger debates and literary exchanges in the first place. In this sense, the *Garīb-nāme* both performs what it represents: the entrance of something strange into a new community, which ultimately helps to construct that community as such, bringing it into a new spiritual and social orbit. As we have seen, this is also how Rūmī and Solţān Valad understood the gharīb, whether it be in the case of the ‘gharīb’ Kheẓr, who came to instruct Moses about true religion, or in the case of many dissimilar ‘gharībs’ who

together give voice to a new religious *rabāb*, or covenant, which was itself created by a plurality of literary languages.

Similarly, like ‘*Āşık Paşa*, Yūnus Emre also widely appropriated multiple literary conventions and themes from a variety of sources. He then reinterpreted those conventions in a highly resonant and popular manner through the composition of a new Turkish *maşnavī* as well as through various devotional hymns. Just as ‘*Āşık Paşa* presented his own argument about why Turkish as a literary language was not derivative of Arabic or Persian (and by extension, why his own literary activity was not derivative of authors in Arabic or Persian), Yūnus Emre’s multiple appropriations of Arabic and Persian literary conventions speaks to a more fundamental engagement with those literary and theological traditions, despite the fact that he is often presented as a lone ‘*garīb*,’ free of Arabic and Persian ‘influence.’ In contradistinction, I have argued that Yūnus Emre sought to depict himself as a lone, wandering ‘*garīb*’ partly because such a claim had already been made by various other important figures in Rūm. As I have suggested, the efficacy of claiming to be a *garīb* or *gharīb* was largely due to the fact that others were making similar claims about their own spiritual authority.

Not only did Rūmī, Solţān Valad, and ‘*Āşık Paşa* belong to similar schools of theology as did Yūnus Emre, but they were also arguably conversant with a similar poetics which they partly developed in this region. These authors employed, to different degrees, practices of appropriation and reinterpretation of multiple ‘sources,’ both canonical and popular, literary and oral, Arabic and Persian, Greek and Turkish, and sometimes even Christian and Islamic, as mechanisms for spreading their message in an easily accessible and highly resonant manner. In other words, the chain of appropriation

in this case is not entirely linear, but involves folding together different literary conventions to meet the contemporary needs of particular audiences in light of one's own literary, communal, and religious agenda. The *gharib* in particular is exemplary of these acts of appropriation, as it evoked both a theological and 'popular' understanding that 'strangers' are cut off from their true homelands, whether those lands were in distant geographic realms, or on another metaphysical plane.

Ultimately, this practice of appropriating and reinterpreting literary conventions from multiple sources speaks to the overall argument of this chapter: even though the figure of the *garīb* often represents detachment, dispersion, and isolation, it created theological, social, and literary links across widespread audiences and in multiple languages. Rather than understand the appropriation of the *garīb* in literary Turkish as 'reductive' or a form of cultural 'mimicry,' I have demonstrated how the figure of the *garīb* was part of a larger and more dynamic process: the *revoicing* of Persian and Arabic poetics within a new language, while at the same time, the reframing of those conventions to meet the needs of a particular target audience. Practices of literary and social appropriation serve not only as a connective and competitive link between discrete literary works and even different literary languages, but also as the basis for grounding translocal knowledge in ways that had locally resonant and comprehensible dimensions, then. Finally, this process arguably did not occur passively or reductively, as concepts like 'taklid' imply, but rather only happened as the result of many sustained efforts to create a new literary language and new religious communities in tandem, based in a particular practice of literary appropriation and reinterpretation. No one, after all, can put a seal on meaning.

Chapter Three

‘The Gharib’s Lord is God’: Intersecting Poetics in Middle Armenian

He recites a Persian qasida in a sweet voice.
Many went near him and gathered there,
They listened to the sound [*dzayn*] of the song and the melody,
They say, “Let’s gather and take him to the Chief,
That he should rejoice from this sweet voice [*dzayn*].”
He went with joy and a willing heart,
For the chief was a companion of the Great P’olat,
He went and made happy whoever was there,
Until they gave him a robe [*khalat’*] and treasured things.
When the hour arrived that they should sleep,
They command that he return to his home,
[But] he begged and said, “Give room to the gharib,
I do not have another place to go as you command.”²⁹⁷

—Excerpt from the Armenian romance, *History of the Youth Farman*

How can we sing the LORD’s song in a foreign land?

—Psalm 137:4 (NRSV)

²⁹⁷ Shushanik Nazaryan, ed., *Patmut’ iwn Farman Mankann: (Mijnadaryan Poem)* (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR GA Hratarakch’ut’yun, 1957), 136-7.

1. Introduction

Shortly after his consecration as catholicos of the Armenian Church in 1166, the sixty-six year old Nersēs Shnorhali addressed his scattered flock for the first time.

While Nersēs was born and raised in the Armenian principality of Cilicia, immediately north-east of the Mediterranean Sea, he was highly aware that his audience was dispersed across many distant regions. After the collapse of the Bagratid Armenian kingdom in the previous century and the victory of the Saljūqs over the Byzantines in 1071, the Armenian people were made to migrate southward and westward in massive waves. Even the see of the Armenian Church — and by extension, Nersēs himself — was now beyond the ancestral Armenian homeland, as Cilicia had been founded and settled by the descendants of migrant Armenian nobles and chieftains.

Although Nersēs' *General Epistle* instructs monks, bishops, foot soldiers, governors, landowners, farmers, artisans, and merchants individually in the Christian faith, the theme of widespread dispersion undergirds the entire work. Nersēs says this much himself in the epistle's famous introduction, which represents one of the earliest and most cogent articulations of a nascent Armenian 'diaspora.' He addresses his epistle not only "to all you believers [who are] of the Armenian race, who are in the east, dwelling there in the proper country of Armenia, and those in regions in the west, wandering there in dispersion, and those here in the Mediterranean, dispersed amongst foreign-speaking peoples," but even to "those at the ends of the earth, scattered in city and fortress, in village and farm."²⁹⁸ The *General Epistle* may have been describing a

²⁹⁸ Nersēs Shnorhali, *T'ught' Ĕndhanrakan*, ed. Ĕ M. Baghdasaryan (Yerevan: Gitut'yun, 1995), 53.

new diasporic period of Armenian history, but it also sowed the seeds of a new narrative about the Armenian people, who were not only far from home, but even dispersed to the very edges of civilization.

For Nersēs, even though the Armenian people were living away from their ancestral lands, they were still unified in the body of the Armenian church. Essentially, he had to address a flock with no immediate access to their shepherd. As far as Nersēs saw it, this problem boiled down to a matter of communication:

In this time of evil and of diverse kingdoms it is not possible to go around to all parts of the world and preach the word of God as the holy apostles did. Our nation does not presently have a royal capital or assembly, which formerly allowed us to sit on the patriarchal and magisterial throne, and teach our people God's law as the first patriarchs and doctors did. But we are like the wild goat that has escaped from dogs and hunters to live in caves, lacking even villages and farms to supply our bare physical necessities. [...] Nor is there any help from kings and princes who believe in Christ. [...] We must therefore take care to advise and teach according to our rank and through our words to pour the milk of God into the mouths of the souls of our children in Christ. As already noted, it is impossible to do this in person.²⁹⁹

In fact, the problem of communicating the church's teachings across far-flung communities, as well as the lack of political support from a strong, centralized power beyond Cilicia, was not as severe as it would become in subsequent centuries. At least there was a flourishing revival of Armenian literature, theology, art, and music in Cilicia, which became a kingdom when Levon II received a crown from the Byzantine emperor Alexius III Angelus and another crown from the Holy Roman emperor, Henry VI, at the end of the 12th century. In the decades which followed, there was even a glimmer of hope

for an alliance with the Mongols after king Het'um traveled to the court of the Great Khan Möngke in Karakorum in 1253. Those initial hopes were dashed after the subsequent Mongol conversion to Islam, however, and it was not long before the last Armenian kingdom began to weaken, hemmed in by powerful opposition on all sides.³⁰⁰ The kingdom eventually fell to the Mamlūks of Egypt in 1375, and would be the last form of Armenian statehood until the twentieth century.

But from Nersēs' perspective, and likely for many of those who read the *General Epistle* as though it were speaking to their own historical situation in the following centuries, the difficulties of life in dispersion had never been so stringent. In a broad sense, this chapter takes up Nersēs' question of how to communicate effectively to different audiences scattered across a vast distance; how to unify those audiences and draw them effectively under the theological auspices of the Armenian church. In so doing, I argue that Armenian clergymen after Nersēs tried to create a narrative of Armenian *unity* within discourse on Armenian dispersion and migration, and that this discourse in part laid the cornerstone for more contemporary understandings of diaspora in subsequent centuries.

²⁹⁹ Nersēs Shnorhali, *General Epistle*, trans. Arakel Aljalian (New Rochelle, N.Y.: St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, 1996), 17.

³⁰⁰ As the contemporary Venetian statesman — and, it should be noted, prolific supporter of the crusades — Marino Sanuto put it, “The king of Armenia is under the fangs of four ferocious beasts: the lion, or the Tartars, to whom he pays a heavy tribute; the leopard, or the Sultan, who daily ravages his frontiers; the wolf, or the Turks, who destroy his power; and the serpent, or the pirates of our seas, who

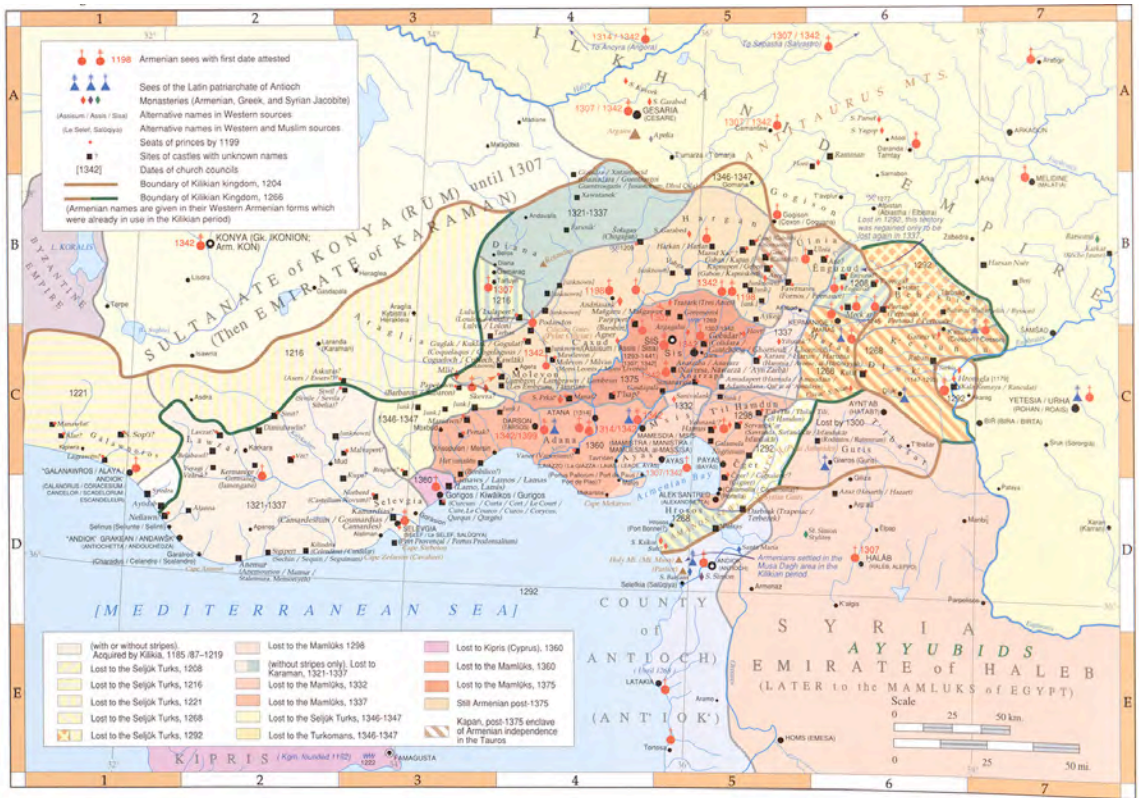


Fig. 7: The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia³⁰¹

worry the very bones of the Christians of Armenia.” Quoted from Henry H. Howorth, *History of the Mongols: From the 9th to the 19th Century*, vol. 3 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1888), 579.

³⁰¹ Robert H. Hewsen and Christopher C. Salvatico, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

However, while Nersēs Shnorhali's *General Epistle* would have been sent to several prominent churches and cities, where it likely would have been read aloud to the populace, the epistle was still written in Classical Armenian, the language of the church, which no longer reflected the spoken language of the day. Hence, even though the *Epistle* addresses, say, farmers and field-hands, it would have done so in an arcane language that only the literate and well-educated could understand. Priests would then act as mediating figures who would interpret Nersēs' message and deliver it to those illiterate communities. Consequently, as I see it, the problem of communicating across these distances was not only a matter of circulating manuscripts in lieu of being unable to address those communities in person, but, beyond Nersēs' own concern at the time, also involved communicating in a manner which would be comprehensible to a wide variety of target audiences. This widely accessible mode of communicating would need to speak not only to diverse communities across a broad geographical range, but also bind those communities into a similar social and confessional fabric, much like the other poetic 'voices' we observed in previous chapters.

In other words, if clergymen and other poets were to shape an understanding of the universality of Armenian life on the periphery, then in many ways, they would have to speak the language of the periphery. Even more than in a geographic sense, that 'periphery' should be understood as existing largely beyond the major institutions of learning at the time—beyond monasteries, universities, or the royal court—as the 'periphery' to these more enduring centers of cultural production was where oral literature was composed and consumed in the 'vernacular' tongue. As we will see, one of the earliest 'vernacular' romances in Armenian, the *History of the Youth Farman*, not

only takes place in Assyria and Khorāsān, features characters who all have Persian names, and for the most part is totally devoid of Christianity, it also is one of the earliest records of this new discourse on exile and emigration within Armenian literature.

Farman, the protagonist of the *History*, identifies himself as a ‘gharib’ — meaning stranger, emigre, or foreigner — while singing the earliest song that takes the ‘gharib’ as its subject in Armenian.

Significantly, at roughly the same time the oldest extant copy of the *History* was recorded, two prominent figures in the Armenian church also began to compose poetry on the gharib in a thoroughly Christian vein. While bishop Mkrtych‘ Naghash (d. 1475) and Aṙak‘el Baghishets‘i (d. 1454) used extremely similar language and poetic structure as did the *History of the Youth Farman*, they employed the gharib to represent the universal brotherhood of all Christians, and especially to express the unity of isolated Christians who were living in dispersion. I posit that these authors did not use the sophisticated theological terminology available within Classical Armenian to describe exile or migration, as did the great theologian Grigor Tat‘ewats‘i, nor did they fall back on preexisting biblical models for understanding dispersion, but rather they adopted a more popular terminology, rooted in the figure of the gharib, which was already widespread in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literature at the time. Hence, in choosing to adopt the gharib as their own instead of using any number of preexisting biblical models for dispersion, I present the case that these authors wanted to shape how lay Armenians thought about dispersion by using a figure with which their audiences were likely already familiar—the gharib.

Nersēs' emphasis on the difficulties of life in dispersion, as well as the challenge it posed for the Armenian church in communicating with distant believers, deserves another look precisely because these issues only become more salient as time goes on. The dispersion of the Armenians only intensified during the early modern period, as merchants, priests, and other intellectuals began to circulate not only across Rūm and the Near East, but also India, Central Asia, and Europe. For this reason, I lastly examine the rapid spread of manuscripts and even incunabula related to the gharib within a century after Mkrtych' Naghash's death. In my examination of the gharib's material afterlife during these periods, I seek to build the case that the medieval gharib was not a minor phenomenon, but rather played an important role in shaping communal understandings of emigration and exile as Armenian diasporic communities took root around the globe.

2. Communication and Community

'Gharib' was never adopted as part of the Classical Armenian lexicon, and it does not seem to appear in any historical works in Classical Armenian prior to the 12th century. Generally, the earliest known appearances of the 'gharib' in Armenian manuscripts occur as proper names, such as in the case of a 12th century Armenian prince, Ab-ul-Gharib, or 'father of the gharib.'³⁰² The Armenian colophon tradition, which provides a treasure-

³⁰² It is largely unclear why Ab-ul-Gharib had this name. Like many other Armenian princes and chieftains who were appointed as governors of eastern regions of the Byzantine Empire, Ab-ul-Gharib acted as the governor of Tarsus, where he ruled from the citadel of al-Bira and aided the crusaders against the Saljūq sultan Moḥammad I. However, Baldwin de Le Bourg, who became count of Edessa after the first Crusade and later ruled the kingdom of Jerusalem, eventually began to suspect Ab-ul-Gharib and other Armenian princes of treachery, and he dealt with the perceived Armenian threat by laying siege to al-Bira for a full year. Facing certain defeat, Ab-ul-Gharib surrendered in 1117. The chronicler Matthew of Edessa reported that Baldwin's actions stirred up "more hatred against the Christians than against the Turks," as he

trove of historical information at the end of many manuscripts, similarly attests to a wide variety of men and women who were identified as ‘gharibs.’ There was a certain Kharip ‘Magistros, for example, who helped to renew and renovate Marmashēn in 1225; a female Gharib, the mother of a Fr. Vardan Baghishets‘i, whose name was recorded in a colophon in 1384; an old widow Gharip who sponsored the production of a New Testament in 1490.³⁰³ Although the meaning of these names in general, and Ab-ul-Gharib in particular, is not explained, it’s clear that Armenian nobility at least had some conception of the ‘gharib’ even before Nersēs Shnorhali wrote his *General Epistle*. However, we do not see the ‘gharib’ emerge in poetry until the rise of ‘vernacular’ literature around the Cilician period.

Consequently, we must go over the emergence of ‘vernacular’ Armenian in its written form before we address the Armenian gharib, as these two histories are closely intertwined. After all, the gharib could not emerge as a literary figure until the ‘vernacular’ became a literary language in its own right, as it bore a storehouse of loan-words and poetic tropes which were alien to the corpus of Classical Armenian literature. Just as importantly, the ways in which the earliest Armenian poets employed this common tongue have much to tell us about the emergence of the gharib in Armenian literature, as the use of the ‘vernacular’ often coincides with a desire to engage with new, widespread audiences on their own terms and in a more accessible language. Therefore, in this section, my investigation of Middle Armenian will encompass not only the rise of

went on to send many other Armenian princes into exile. See Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades: Tenth to Twelfth Centuries*, trans. Ara Edmond Dostourian (Belmont, MA: National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, 1993), 220.

³⁰³ The frequency of these names only increases over time, and we later see a proliferation of male “Gharibs” who are remembered in Armenian manuscripts in 1498, 1549, 1561, 1585, 1592, 1628, 1640, 1651, 1658, and still even into the 18th century. This list of dates does not even include variants of the

a new literary *language*, but also a concomitant *strategy* for deploying that language, via recognizable literary forms and figures, in order to communicate effectively with lay audiences and regulate confessional boundaries. As with the rise of Oghuz Turkish as a literary language, my interest here is not in language itself, but rather how and why particular authors developed and mobilized that language for different reasons. I will subsequently argue that the need to communicate with diverse and lay audiences helps to explain why ‘vernacular’ Armenian poets, especially clergymen in Armenian Church, adopted and perhaps even ‘christianized’ the *gharib* in their own literary production, despite its widespread prevalence in Islamic literature within this shared geographic space. However, as we will see, the relationships between these different ‘*gharibs*’ cannot be not so linearly charted.

First, a few words on terminology are necessary. The modern Armenian word for ‘vernacular’ is *ashkharhabar*, meaning the language of the country or land, as opposed to Classical Armenian, or *grabar*, which means the ‘written language.’ However, *ashkharhabar* can also be used as an adjective, even signifying “love of the world” or worldly. Many of the earliest appearances of the word *ashkharhabar* attest to this latter meaning, and it wasn’t until the 15th century that Amirdovlat’ Amasiats’i called the common tongue of his medical treatises “*ashkharabar*.” The earliest mentions of a ‘vernacular’ literature in the medieval period refer to a “*geghjuk*” language or dialect, which literally means the language of villagers or peasants; a common language spoken outside of the major centers of learning, such as the monastery or court. In 1293, for instance, Yovhannēs Erznkats’i wrote in his *Interpretation of Grammar* that there were

name such as “*Gharib Khat’un*,” “*Gharipkhan*,” “*Gharipshah*,” and “*Gharibbēk*.” See H. Acharean, *Hayots’ Andznanunneri Baṙaran*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Hratarakut’iwn Sewan hratarakch’akan tan, 1972), 136-8.

eight forms of the Armenian language: ‘*ostanik*,’ which James Russell translates as ‘court’ or ‘central’ (*mijerkreay*) Armenian, and seven ‘*ezerakan*,’ or peripheral forms of Armenian beyond the Ayrarat region.³⁰⁴ Frequently, these different Armenian languages are all subsumed under the title of Middle or Cilician Armenian today.

Before the 12th century, there are only a handful of works written in this language. For instance, the late 9th and early 10th century historian Yovhannēs Draskhanakertts‘i tells us that Shahpuh Bagratuni wrote his own history in a ‘village’ or ‘rustic’ language [*gegħjuk baniw*], although this work is now lost to us.³⁰⁵ The erudite 12th century physician, Mkhit‘ar Herats‘i, who studied under Nersēs Shnorhali and resided in the capital of Cilicia, wrote his famous treatise, *The Relief of Fevers*, in the ‘vernacular’ precisely to make it accessible to those who could not understand Classical Armenian. Herats‘i writes that “I made this [book] in prose and in the common dialect [*gegħjuk ew ardzak barbarov*] so that it might be easily understood [*tiwrahas lits‘i*] for all readers.”³⁰⁶ The work describes how to treat and care for patients with common illnesses, such as malaria and typhoid, in the Cilician region. Herats‘i’s contemporary, Mkhit‘ar Gosh, likewise wrote his lawbook in this common language so that it too could be used by a wide audience. Finally, as Kevork Bardakjian has argued, despite the fact that writers from this period frequently portrayed their own language as ‘rustic’ or ‘peripheral,’ the Cilician state likely played a significant role in developing this language to meet its own administrative needs. Many treaties from the Cilician period are not written in Classical

³⁰⁴ James Russell, *Yovhannēs T‘lkuranc‘i and the Mediaeval Armenian Lyric Tradition* (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1987), 4.

³⁰⁵ See Yovhannēs Draskhanakertts‘i, *History of Armenia*, trans. Grigor H. Maksoudian (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1987), 125. Other works, such as an early 12th century poem by Vardan Haykazzn in praise of Catholicos Grigor II Vkasasēr, incorporated aspects of the vernacular and Classical Armenian together.

Armenian, which was no longer spoken, but rather in this new ‘worldly’ language, which was admitted to writing and then as literary standard during this period.

Not all early works in the vernacular displayed the same degree of worldly pragmatism, however. In addition to penning one of the longest medieval poems in Classical Armenian, Nersēs Shnorhali also recorded a bright collection of riddles in the common tongue, which he called “ashkharakan khōsk,” meaning “country” or “wordly” speech. Interestingly, much like Rūmī, Nersēs wanted to communicate with his audience via literary and even musical forms that already resonated on a popular level, and this was true whether he wrote in the common tongue or not. For example, in a famous incident reported by the historian Kirakos Gandzakets‘i, Nersēs once heard his guards singing hymns of praise to the sun. Rather than banishing such pagan expression outright, Nersēs wrote a new hymn using the same melody, but instead lauded Christ as the Sun of Righteousness.³⁰⁷

This is a major point, as this general attitude toward *adapting* widely circulating literary and musical forms—even from other languages or religions—was held not only by Nersēs, but by many of the earliest poets in Middle Armenian as well. As we have seen, other authors in Rūm were also invested in communicating to their audience through musical and literary forms which were already widely popular. I argued in chapters one and two, to different degrees, that Jalāl-ad-Dīn Rūmī, Solṭān Valad, ‘Āşık Paşa, and Yunūs Emre all employed this general strategy of revoicing translocal religious discourses and literary forms to meet the needs of their contemporary, local audiences,

³⁰⁶ Mkhīt‘ar Herats‘i, *Mkhīt‘aray Bzhshkapeti Herats‘woy Jermants‘ Mkhīt‘arut‘iwn*, (Venice: Tparani Srboyn Ghazaru, 1832), viii.

³⁰⁷ Kirakos Gandzakets‘i, *Patmut‘iwn Hayots‘*, ed. Karapet Aghabeki Melik‘-Ōhanjanyan (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR Gitut‘iwnneri Akademiayi Hratarkch‘ut‘iwn, 1961), 120.

and so it at least stands to reason that prominent Armenian authors could employ similar methods. Furthermore, I would suggest that it is not coincidental that this practice abounds at a historical moment when Armenian authors began to use the “common” language more seriously as a vehicle for literary expression, since choosing to write in a widely comprehensible language gave authors access to new audiences—in a sense, allowed them to play a role in forming these confessional and interpretive communities—who were beyond major centers of courtly or religious learning. Hence, many authors who composed ‘vernacular’ poetry during this era show a heightened sensitivity to communicating with new audiences in resonant ways, and we will later see that this had implications for how they mobilized the gharib.

In fact, two of the earliest poets who used vernacular Armenian, Yovhannēs Erznkats‘i (d. 1293), whose poetic use of the gharib will be covered in the next section, and Kostandin Erznkats‘i (d. 1320), provide many tangible examples of how this process of rewriting the literary forms of others could work. Both men lived in Erznka (Erzincan), one of the largest Anatolian cities after Konya and a major center of fabric production. However, while the erudite Yovhannēs was educated in the Armenian church and even composed a commentary on grammar in Classical Armenian, it seems that Kostandin may have only studied in a monastery until he was 15 years old, as we will see. What is certain about both men, however, is that they actively participated in a greater culture of appropriation, albeit in different ways. For instance, Yovhannēs helped institute an Armenian confraternity in Erznka that promoted forms of social and spiritual chivalry modeled on the Islamic *futuwwa* movement, which had already spread across Rūm, including in the city of Konya. Rachel Goshgarian has cogently argued that the Armenian

iteration of this movement may have been “part of the Armenian Church’s attempt to restructure its own institutions in the face of a fear of ‘corruption’ by Islamic social and religious institutions,”³⁰⁸ and it seems that Kostandin may have been a member of this urban confraternity as well.

If Yovhannēs reflects an attempt by the Church to reform its own social institutions to compete with contemporary Islamic reform movements, then Kostandin reflects a similar attempt via poetry to engage with a broader public by reinterpreting important Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literary forms and topics within a Christian worldview. For instance, in one well-known example, Kostandin’s “brothers”³⁰⁹ requested that he compose a poem in the meter and style of Ferdowsī’s Persian epic, the *Shāh-nāma*, which describes Iranian history beginning with the creation of the world. Kostandin relates the event thusly:

There was also a man, and he was reciting the *Shāh-nāma* out loud [lit., with his voice]. The brothers requested, “Recite a poem to us in the manner [lit., voice] of

³⁰⁸ Rachel Goshgarian, “Futuwwa in Thirteenth Century Rūm and Armenia: Reform Movements and the Managing of Multiple Allegiances on the Seljuk Periphery,” in *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*, eds. A. C. S Peacock and Sara Nur Yildiz (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 228. Goshgarian here is expanding upon an argument first posited by the incredibly prolific scholar James Russell, who, in Goshgarian’s words, “suggests that the pre-Christian, Iranian substrata, linked to the practices of Mithraic cults in Anatolia, were preserved within the context of late medieval futuwwa-type confraternities,” and that the confraternity in 13th century Erzinka “were part of a wider church-inspired institutional reform.” *Ibid.*, 255-6. See also James Russell, “On Mithraism and Freemasonry,” in *Heredom: the Transactions of the Scottish Rite Research Society* 4 (1995), 269-86.

³⁰⁹ While there has been some debate whether Kostandin’s audience was based in a nearby monastery or was entirely ‘secular,’ Theo van Lint has productively noted that there is no need to reduce this public to one group or another. As van Lint notes, “we may then assume that with the term ‘brothers’ two different groups of people are meant: on the one hand the monastic brothers with whom he seems to have fallen out, and those who ordered ‘worldly’ poems from him. In speculations about Kostandin’s public it is always assumed that this must have consisted of one group only, consistently addressed by the poet as ‘brothers.’ I fail to see why Kostandin may not have addressed many of his poems to his spiritual brothers of the monastery, and others, not only the more ‘worldly’ ones, to members of the *Brotherhood*, with whom he may have entertained warm relations.” Theo van Lint, “Kostandin of Erzinka: An Armenian Religious Poet of the XIII-XIVth Century” (PhD diss., University of Leiden, 1996), 22.

the *Shāh-nāma*.” I wrote these words. Read them in the manner [lit., voice] of the *Shāh-nāma*.³¹⁰

We ought to remember that Rūmī’s own disciples, as well as Solṭān Valad’s companion, essentially made very similar requests: above all, they wanted new works to be composed in the meter and style of other poems which were popular and difficult to understand. Not only did Kostandin fulfill this request by writing a vernacular Armenian poem in the meter and style of the *Shāh-nāma*, but as Theo van Lint has convincingly argued, this poem also taught complicated ideas about Christian cosmology when read as part of Kostandin’s *Diwan*, swung into a familiar, yet still different, poetic ‘voice.’

Nor is this the only instance we have of Kostandin revoicing common ‘Persianate’ literary figures and forms. In one of his most famous poems, Kostandin describes a fragrant garden, rich in flora and fauna, blossoming in the spring. Suddenly, a *bēlbul* — the Persian word for nightingale — begins to sing, proclaiming that the rose has suddenly blossomed in the garden. Day and night, the nightingale sits by the rose, drunk on its fragrance, and professes its love. Even when other flowers deride the nightingale for its actions, the bird never parts from his Beloved.

This trope of the rose and nightingale has been well documented in Persian literature, and it appears in the works of both Rūmī and ‘Aṭṭār. The rose, or *gol*, often serves as a visual pun for the God, or *koll*, the ‘All,’ whereas the nightingale frequently represents the poet, who wants to contemplate the macrocosm of the universe within the microcosm of the garden. Not only was Kostandin the first poet in Armenian to use this

³¹⁰ See Kostandin Erznkats’i, *Tagher*, edited with introduction by Armenuhi Srapyan (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR GA Hratarakch’ut’yun, 1962), 209. James Russell notes that “Jayn [dzayn] ‘voice’ probably refers not only to meter, but also to the chant traditionally employed by Persians in reciting their

trope, as Armenuhi Srabyan³¹¹ and S. Peter Cowe³¹² have noted, but even more fascinatingly, Kostandin provides an exegesis of his own poem. He makes clear that the rose here is a figure for Christ, whereas other flowers represent different figures from the New Testament.

Hence, like his Persian and Turkish poetic contemporaries, Kostandin frequently repopulated preexisting literary forms, mediums, and figures with new intentions. Unlike those contemporaries, however, Kostandin brought those forms and figures within an explicitly christological framework. “I know that not everyone can learn through the Scriptures,” Kostandin wrote in one poem to “our beloved and honored brother,” a certain Baron Amir. “Therefore,” Kostandin continues, “I have written this, that you may hear it from me.”³¹³ I would also suggest that this passage captures much of the essence of Kostandin’s literary activity: he wrote not only in a widely comprehensible language, but he also chose popular and accessible literary forms by which he could deliver his didactic messages to new audiences on popular grounds which those audiences already understood.

That does not mean, however, that Kostandin’s literary production was devoid of controversy. Equally significant is the fact that Kostandin, like his Oghuz Turkic contemporaries, needed to defend his poetic authority to his detractors. However, Kostandin did not need to defend his use of the ‘vernacular’ as much as he needed to legitimize his activity as a poet, even as a Christian poet, who apparently had not

national epic.” See James Russell, *Yovhannēs T’lkuranc’i and the Mediaeval Armenian Lyric Tradition* (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1987), 7.

³¹¹ Kostandin Erznkats’i, *Tagher*, edited with introduction by Armenuhi Srabyan, 38.

³¹² S. Peter Cowe, “The Politics of Poetics: Islamic Influence on Armenian Verse,” in *Redefining Christian Identity*, eds. J. J. van Ginkel, H. L. Murre-van den Berg and Theo Maarten van Lint (Leuven: Peeters Publishers & Department of Oriental Studies, 2005), 391.

³¹³ Quoted from Van Lint, “Kostandin of Erznka,” 25.

received enough instruction at an authoritative center of learning, although Kostandin lived for at least some of his life in a monastery. Because of this, his detractors demanded to know on what grounds he had the right to be a poet, “for he has not studied under a Vartabed.”³¹⁴ Kostandin notes that these wicked people were full of jealousy “concerning the things that I wrote,” and that they wondered aloud “how does he write [such] sweet words [which] he recites to us.”³¹⁵

Van Lint has argued that this complaint wasn’t merely based on aesthetic grounds, but rather was ethical in nature—if Kostandin had not formally read and internalized a large body of literature in the monastery, he had no moral right to teach others about Christianity.³¹⁶ However, Kostandin’s answer to his critics is highly revealing about the kind of authority he claimed as his own. He noted that until the age of fifteen, he studied at a nearby monastery, but everything changed when he saw a “wondrous vision” of an unidentified man arrayed in “clothes of the sun and full of light.”³¹⁷ This man rose from his throne and tread across Kostandin’s prostrated body; when Kostandin awoke, he had received a divine gift of poetic aptitude.

While the luminous man isn’t identified in Kostandin’s vision, Bardakjian has provocatively suggested that the notion of treading upon an ‘initiate’ as a way to bestow divine grace may have originated in Şūfī communities. Perhaps also indicative of the generally ‘Şūfī’ orientation of Kostandin’s vision are the “sun-like clothes” of the man who was “full of light.” This vision shares strong similarities with the philosophical

³¹⁴ Doctor of the Armenian church.

³¹⁵ Syrapyan, *Kostandin Erznkats’i*, 187.

³¹⁶ Theo van Lint, “The Poet’s Legitimization: The Case of Kostandin Erznkac’i,” in *New Approaches to Medieval Armenian Language and Literature*, ed. Weitenberg, Joseph Johannes Sicco (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), 11-28.

³¹⁷ Syrapyan, *Kostandin Erznkats’i*, 187-8.

writings of Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, who wrote extensively about “light-beings” who bestow a more important form of experiential knowledge upon mankind than can be acquired from book-learning.³¹⁸ Hence, not only did Kostandin base his own poetic authority on this encounter with a similar “light-being,” but his claim likely could have been recognized and understood even by non-Christian audiences.

In many ways, Kostandin’s literary activity reflects an intensification of similar strategies adopted by Nersēs over a century earlier, as Konstandin introduced not only new literary topics and forms into Armenian which he culled from Islamic or ‘worldly’ sources, but he also incorporated those forms into a Christian context in order to communicate effectively with his local audience(s) directly in a nascent poetic language. Similar to the early works of Turkish poetry in Rūm, Kostandin’s poetry was ‘competitive’ with Islamic literature not only in terms of its reinterpretation of Islamic tropes and poetic forms, then, but also in its similar appeal to authority based on direct contact with the divine.³¹⁹ Furthermore, Kostandin did not shy away from engaging with literary discourses which were originally ‘Islamic’ or ‘Persianate’ in nature; on the contrary, I would argue that Kostandin adopted and altered such discourses in part *because* they were popular, and could have therefore made a good vehicle to communicate basic Christian teachings, perhaps even to non-Christian or heterodox Christian audiences, in much the same way as Šūfī lodges in Rūm had begun to adopt Christian iconography in order to draw non-Muslim communities into the spiritual and social life of the lodge. Most importantly, Kostandin was not alone in pursuing this

³¹⁸ Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 75-6.

³¹⁹ We should remember that a popular trope in Šūfī poetry essentially contrasts ‘book-learning’ against subjective experience of God, as we have seen in the case of Yūnus Emre, who juxtaposed himself against the men of the sharī‘a.

literary strategy, but rather it might be said that he was representative of a greater process which was unfolding in Middle Armenian literature.

Another major poet we know of who wrote largely in Middle Armenian during this period, perhaps predating Kostandin by several decades, not only employs similar reconfigurations of Persianate literary forms and Islamic concepts in his own ‘colloquial’ poetry, but is also one of the first Armenian-speaking poets we know of who uses the word ‘gharib.’ That poet is Frik, an enigmatic author who probably lived in the period immediately following the Mongol invasions, sometime in the latter 13th and early to mid 14th centuries. Although a rich tradition of incredibly detailed colophons exists in Armenian, no such colophon has reached us that might provide concrete information on the life of this poet. Instead, scholars have tried to delineate Frik’s time period, general areas of residence, and details from his life based solely upon the poet’s *Diwan*.³²⁰

Like Kostandin’s own poetic corpus, Frik’s *Diwan* claims the poet remained unschooled. Frik’s *Diwan* also claims that the poet traveled extensively in search of his son, who had been carried off into captivity in the wake of the Tatars, although caution must be exercised in any attempt to separate supposedly biographical information from general literary conventions of the time. What we can say for certain, however, is that besides making similar statements about his education as did Kostandin, it is well known that Frik also appropriated explicitly Persianate literary forms and even Islamic discourses.³²¹ One of the most famous examples of this is Frik’s appropriation of a

³²⁰ The most comprehensive study to date remains that of Archbishop Tirayr in 1952. Through a combination of linguistic evidence, overall stylistic coherence of the *Diwan*, references to historical persons such as a detailed account of the life of the fourth ruler of the Ilkhanate, Arghun Khan (d.1291), Tirayr argues that Frik likely lived immediately after Rūmī’s own lifetime.

³²¹ Furthermore, like Yūnus Emre’s *Dīvān*, Frik’s body of poetry is replete with a wide selection of loan words from Arabic and Persian, in addition to a cross-breed of dialectal and Classical Armenian.

quatrain by the 12th century Persian poet Khāqānī,³²² which he quotes in Persian at the end of the 20th poem in his *Diwan*:

In love's kitchen they slaughter none but the good:
They kill not those of comely visage but evil nature.
If you are really a lover, do not flee the slaughter!
For anyone they do not kill—is mortal.³²³

As Babgen Ch'ugaszyan has demonstrated, Frik additionally composed an Armenian version of the quatrain in the 21st poem in his *Diwan*.³²⁴ However, Frik also contextualizes the quatrain here through previous references to the New Testament, such as stating that Christ descended to Earth to teach men, or in observing the prudence of the wise virgins. He also makes statements that might appeal to Christian and non-Christian audiences alike, as the didactic poem urges the audience to consider that life in this world is transient, and therefore we must flee from evil and turn to God if we want to enjoy life eternal. "Try and obtain a way for yourself; this life will not remain to us men," Frik notes, going on to add, "since you have wisdom and prudence and provision for your soul, you Frik, spill the wine from your head and construct a homeland there [in the next

Not surprisingly, this language which bears testament to cumulative encounters with the many peoples Armenians have lived amongst. In what has become Frik's most cited poem, for example, Frik rails against the injustices of "falak'," which is a Persian and Arabic word for heaven, firmament, or celestial sphere, although Frik uses it in the same sense that Persian poets did during the Middle Ages: namely, as a representation of Fate, of the stars' command over the lives of men. In the poem, Frik bemoans the lack of justice in the world, why those drunk on shedding blood go free while the innocent are struck down.

³²² See Babgen Ch'ugaszyan, "Ardyok' Khakanin ē Frikyan k'aryaki heghinakē," in *Tegheqagir* 1965/10, 79-86; A. Shahsuvaryan, "Frikē Khak'anu k'aryaki t'argmanich'," in *Tegheqagir* 1962/11, 85-7; and M. T'ereak'yan, "Prof. Sa'id Nefisi khatatē, or Khaghanin ē heghinakē Frikī parskeren k'aryakin," in *Tegheqagir* 1964/6, 91-3.

³²³ Quoted from James Russell, "Frik: the Bridge of Poetry," in *Anathēmata Heortika: Studies in Honor of Thomas F. Mathews*, ed. Thomas F Mathews et al. (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2009), 260.

³²⁴ See Babgen Ch'ugaszyan, "Frikē parskeren k'aryaki t'argmanich'," in *Banber Matenadarani* 4 (1958), 111-19.

world].”³²⁵ Obviously, the notion that the world is not one’s true home is a simple — yet fundamental — concept which cuts across much Christian, Islamic, and Jewish didactic literature.³²⁶

James Russell notes eloquently in his article, “Frik: The Bridge of Poetry,” that Frik “has taken the Muslim poem and recast [it] in Armenian Christian terms of great symbolic power,” and through this ‘translation,’ the “message has crossed the bridge of the translator from Muslim to Christian territory, as it were.”³²⁷ For our purposes, the question that is relevant to the later emergence of the Armenian gharib, however, is why Frik would bother to do this at all. In other words, why would Frik adopt an ‘Islamic’ quatrain wholesale, or go to the trouble of rewriting it in Armenian?

I would suggest that Kostandin may provide a possible answer, as other scholars, such as Russell, have drawn productive parallels between these contemporary poets of Middle Armenian. We know, for instance, that Kostandin not only composed a Christian poem in the “voice” of the *Shāh-nāma*, but that he did so at the behest of his companions, who apparently were familiar enough with Ferdowsī’s work that they craved new poems to be created in the same style. Clearly, Frik himself is familiar with Khāqānī, and while he does not say whether his audience requested a new work in the ‘voice’ of this quatrain, there seems to me little point of lifting this Persian quatrain word-for-word, positioning it within a Christian poem, and then rewriting it in Armenian with explicit Christian

³²⁵ Frik, *Frik Diwan*, edited with introduction by Archbishop Tirayr (New York: Hratarakut’iwn Hay Baregortsakan Ĕndhanur Miut’ean Melgonean Himnadrami, 1952), 352.

³²⁶ It’s perhaps also significant that Frik pleads with himself to “spill the wine” here. Not only is wine forbidden in Islam, but we also see other Christians from this general period, such as Yovhannēs Erznkats’i, who also proposed banishing wine in his constitution for an Armenian confraternity, which he modeled off Islamic futuwats. However, while it should be stressed that there’s no evidence to suggest that Frik was a member of such an urban confraternity, the fact that Frik chose to make this gesture — whether it was rhetorical or not — perhaps again speaks more to his assimilation of a wide variety of cultural and religious mores than anything else.

overtones if poems such as this were not already circulating among Armenian communities (or if such poetics were not already familiar and enticing to these Armenian speakers). Likewise, if Islamic poetry was popular among certain Armenian communities at this time, it makes sense why these early authors of colloquial poetry would seek to engage so directly with such literary works; much in the same way that Yovhannēs Erznkats‘i wrote a constitution for an urban brotherhood in order to make the institution of the Armenian church relevant at a time of sweeping religious and social reform. Hence, Frik arguably employed similar strategies as did Kostandin in composing poetry for a multilingual audience through broadly recognizable discourses and literary forms in general, and explicitly Islamic literature in particular.

To summarize my brief overview of early ‘colloquial’ Armenian poetry, at least three factors motivated these authors to reinterpret the literary figures and forms of ‘others.’ First, after centuries of living among Arabs, Persians, and later, Turks, multilingual Armenians were broadly familiar with the poetics, semiotics, and literary conventions employed by these other literatures, and the spoken language reflects this lexically. Second, while we are unsure of the degree, Armenian communities also consumed literature in those other languages to the point where, at least in Erzincan, these audiences desired new works to be composed in similar musical and metrical styles. Finally, the Armenian church needed to communicate in resonant ways in order to maintain the integrity of its flock, to remain competitive with other religious institutions in Rūm, and to draw Armenians more soundly within a Christian social and theological fabric.

³²⁷ Russell, “Frik: The Bridge of Poetry,” 261.

What we see, then, isn't necessarily a passive form of cultural diffusion across languages, as implied by terms such as 'influence' or 'cross-cultural fertilization,' but rather an active negotiation over the meaning of literary figures which often were not limited to any single language or people. Hence, even while some words—such as the bulbul, or nightingale—may have entered the spoken Armenian lexicon in ideologically neutral ways, they did not necessarily remain 'neutral,' as specific authors of Middle Armenian sought to define such figures within a widely comprehensible interpretive framework rooted in Christian teachings.³²⁸ Once again, the problem here boils down to how to best communicate with one's greater community, which sometimes was occasioned by an attempt to foster particular confessional boundaries. It furthermore bears stressing that Armenians were by no means alone in adopting this strategy of engaging with linguistically, theologically, or even geographically different 'literatures' for these reasons. As we have seen in chapters one and two, Rūmī likewise reinterpreted translocal Šūfī discourses for his audience in Konya by writing in the *vazn* and *ṭarz* of 'Aṭṭār and Sanā'ī; Solṭān Valad wrote the *Rabāb-nāma* in the *vazn* of the *Maṣnavī*, thereby reinterpreting it for Turkish and Greek speaking communities; and finally, 'Āṣīq Paşa wrote Oghuz Turkish in the *vazn* of Persian literature in order to be authoritative alongside other Šūfī authors, as well as to convert Turkish audiences to Islam. It might be said that this type of cross-linguistic literary engagement was not the exception in Rūm: it was becoming commonplace, and its successful use bore high social and religious stakes in the forming and maintaining such confessional communities, in part through the

³²⁸ Again, as Russell provocatively notes in the case of Frik's corpus, "It is evident from the foregoing that minstrel poems of Christian counsel are a kind of interface between popular minstrelsy, with its stock of imagery and vocabulary from the Muslim world and from the pre-Christian traditions of Parthian Armenia, and the ideology of the Church." *Ibid.*, 261.

adaptation of enticing poetic ‘voices’ which cut across individual languages and religions.

Having established this general background, we can now turn to the early poetic emergence of the gharib in colloquial Armenian, including in the work of Yovhannēs Erznkats‘i and Frik, who both use the figure of the gharib to evoke, broadly, the virtues of hospitality. However, it is important to keep in mind how Kostandin and Frik engaged with Persianate letters in general, harmonizing literary forms and figures which cut across a variety of audiences with the teachings of the Armenian church. As I will argue, these strategies do not simply vanish as poetry as Middle Armenian becomes much more prevalent as a literary and especially poetic language. Rather, these threads are particularly important in connecting a much larger picture: how such authors engaged with ‘other’ literatures, as well as widespread literary figures which are not limited to any single people or interpretive framework, in order to better shape their own religious communities. It is within this greater story that we find the gharib taking root both in the Armenian literary imagination and social body.

3. ‘Beyond’ the Monastery: Early Representations of the Armenian Gharib

This section will outline the early emergence of the gharib in Armenian letters, and in so doing, will attempt to demarcate some general patterns and major differences between the early Armenian gharib and the strangers of near contemporary Persian and Turkish poetry. In particular, I will examine one of the oldest Middle Armenian romances, *The*

History of the Youth Farman [*Patmut' iwn Farman Mankann*], which also contains one of the oldest recorded Armenian poems dedicated solely to the topic of *gharibut' iwn*, or the state of being an exile or stranger. More importantly, *The History of the Youth Farman* allows us to observe the contours of a complex relationship between early poetry in Middle Armenian and other literatures within this shared geographic space, both in terms of the content of that poetry, as well as how such literature may have been consumed on a popular level.

It is out of the matrix of these relationships that the *gharib* begins to wander in Armenian letters, eventually attracting the attention of two major 15th century poets, Bishop Mkrtych' Naghash and Aṙak'el Baghishets'i, who were both born in the village of Poṙ, and who both became important figures in the Armenian church. While the *History of the Youth Farman* contains virtually nothing 'Christian' aside from a brief encomium tacked on at the end which praises "the only begotten" and the "father above," Mkrtych' Naghash and Aṙak'el Baghishets'i framed the *gharib* in *explicitly* Christian terms. Much about Mkrtych' and Aṙak'el's poetry draws from these early representations of the *gharib* which were not fundamentally Christian in nature, however. Hence, this section begins to establish that the *gharib* was popular enough in an emerging Middle Armenian poetics — even sharing some general patterns with Islamicate poetry in Rūm — that it merited revoicing within a Christian framework, which the next section will address.

Before turning to the *History of the Youth Farman*, let us return briefly to Frik and Yovhannēs Erznkats'i, as they are the first poets we know of to mention the *gharib* in Armenian, and there is some continuity between the use of 'gharib' in the *History* and the work of these poets. However, while Frik asserted that we must build a homeland

[*hayrenik'*] in the next life, we do not see him pairing this idea explicitly with the concept of the gharib, as would later poets.³²⁹ The gharib first makes an appearance in one of Frik's poems, titled "On Fratricide."³³⁰ This poem opens with praise to the Creator before describing a mansion which has no equal: its walls are golden, its pipes are gilded, its rose water fragrant. Two brothers of the same parents then arrive on the scene. The oldest brother is of a good type [*aghek tipar*], but the younger has a fiery and jealous disposition.³³¹ Frik asks his audience to observe the work of the devil, who turned the two brothers into two "strangers" [*ōtar*, the Armenian word for foreign, foreigner, stranger, and non-Armenian]. Filled with wrath, the younger brother pulls out a knife and leaps upon the throat of his sibling. Just before he pulls the knife across his brother's neck and spills blood across the pristine bath house floor, he pauses to gloat that this "wealth and treasure" [*mal u mulk's*] suits him well.³³²

At that very moment, however, God makes one of the tiles in the bathroom floor address the younger brother as "son of a great father, and friend of the gharib and exceedingly wise, [*u gharip dawst u khist khikar*]" before questioning why he would want to spill blood for "this transient wealth."³³³ Not surprisingly, the younger brother is eventually overcome with remorse and begs for forgiveness from his older sibling. What concerns this study, however, is not this tidy narrative resolution but rather the phrase "gharip dawst" and its juxtaposition against the Armenian word for stranger, *ōtar*. First, from the context of the poem, it is clear that to become estranged from your own brother

³²⁹ Archbishop Tirayr does include a long poem in the appendix of Frik's *Diwan* which treats the gharib this way, although it is uncertain whether this poem was written by Frik, or when it was composed.

³³⁰ Frik, *Diwan*, 474-77.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 474.

³³² *Ibid.*, 475.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 475.

is the result of evil works, whereas one who is kind to gharibs also possesses an inherent goodness and intellect that is capable of receiving council.³³⁴ In other words, being both ‘gharip dawst’ and ‘khist khikar’ are presented as virtues which, when evoked, appeal to the younger brother’s better nature.

Yet, ‘*gharīb dūst*’ is also a Persian expression which has many synonyms, such as ‘*gharīb navāz*’ (benefactor of the gharīb), ‘*gharīb parvar*’ (nourisher of the gharīb), and ‘*mehmān dūst*’ (friend of the guest, or hospitable).³³⁵ For our purposes, Frik’s poem therefore suggests that ‘gharīb’ existed not only as a standalone word that might substitute for other Armenian designations for “wanderer,” “destitute person,” or “stranger,” but also was paired with specific ideas—such as hospitality or caring for the poor—which arguably existed at the time as part of a broader mentalité. For example, Rūmī similarly declared that caring for strangers [*gharīb navāzī*] is inherent to doing the work of the men of religion [*kār-e mardān-e dīn*], and was therefore a fundamental religious virtue.³³⁶ This widespread understanding of the virtue of hospitality can even be found in India, where a founding figure in the Cheshṭī Ṣūfī order, Mo‘īn al-Dīn Cheshṭī (d. 1236), adopted the title ‘Gharīb Navāz,’ or ‘benefactor of the gharīb.’ Even more importantly, this mentalité also informed the integrated literary cultures of Rūm. As we have seen in chapter two, the hero of the Arabic-Persian-Turkish romance, *Varqa va*

³³⁴ This is evident in the label of the young brother as “khikar,” which is used as an adjective here, but comes the tale of the wise advisor, Khikar, which was translated into Armenian from the Greek during the 5th century and remained a synonym for prudence and intelligence well into the Middle Ages.

³³⁵ This expression has endured until the present day, as there is even a village named Gharīb Dūst in contemporary Iran. Rūmī also uses many similar expressions during this period in time. For instance, in one story from the *Maṣnavī*, Rūmī argues that one must treat the temporary states [*hāl*] which take up residence in one’s body and mind with the same diligent attentiveness that one would show to an honored guest. The body, Rūmī says, is like a guesthouse [*mehmānkhāna*], and consequently one must be a friend to guests [*mehmān dūst*] as well as kind toward strangers [*gharīb navāz*]. Rūmī, *Maṣnavī*, vol. 3, 241. See also ‘Alī Akbar Dekhodā’s discussion on ‘gharīb-dūst,’ in the *Loghāt-Nāma*, ed. Moḥammad Mo‘īn and Ja‘far Shahīdī, vol. 10 (Tehran: Mo‘assasa-‘e Enteshārāt va Chāp-e Dāneshgāh-e Tehrān, 1994), 14710-1.

Golshāh, appealed to the mercy of the Sultan of Syria by claiming to be a ‘garīb,’ a scene which is repeated over and over in the *History of the Youth Farman*, as I will demonstrate here. At least on a rhetorical level, caring for the ‘gharīb’ was widely recognized as a righteous behavior by many socio-religious communities at this period in time.

Hospitality toward emigres, strangers, and exiles was also clearly important to various Armenian communities as well. The Armenians themselves had widely scattered beyond their ancestral lands, and the virtue of being a friend to strangers appears frequently in a wide variety of literature from this period. Mkhit‘ar Gosh, who wrote the first Armenian law-code in the colloquial tongue, also wrote a series of popular fables, one of which rebukes those who are inhospitable to strangers or foreigners³³⁷ [*ōtar*]. The kernels of this discourse can be traced back to the Torah in the case of Jews and Christians, and to the Qur‘ān and the ḥadīth in the case of Muslims—such concerns were quite old, but were also extremely prevalent during this time.

Additionally, at nearly the same time as Frik, other important figures in the Armenian church were beginning to conceive of the gharib in similar terms. While Yovhannēs Erznkats‘i largely wrote in Classical Armenian, he does have a body of literature, mostly quatrains, which employ a more ‘colloquial’ tongue, and in one of these short quatrains we find a similar articulation of the gharib:

³³⁶ Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-‘ārefīn*, 167.

³³⁷ Furthermore, the *Lawcode* of Mkhit‘ar Gosh quotes Deuteronomy, commanding that “you will not pervert the laws of the stranger or of the orphan or of the widow.” See Mkhit‘ar Gosh, *The Lawcode (Datastanagirk‘) of Mxit‘ar Gosh*, trans. Robert W. Thomson (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 200. However, as Thomson notes, we should keep in mind that “Mkhit‘ar’s main concern is that Armenians should avoid contact with these “outsiders” as much as possible,” referring to aylaseṛ or aylazgi, lit. of another kind of tribe, a term which used to refer to the Philistines but in Mkhit‘ar Gosh’s day often meant Muslims. Hence, ‘strangers.’ *Ibid.*, 23.

Whoever speaks badly of [or to] strangers [*ōtarin*], let he himself become a gharib.

May he go to a foreign land [*i yōtar erkir*], to know the lot [*ghatr*] of the gharib, Even if gold easily comes to him,

While he is separated from his loved ones, that gold is not even worth ashes.³³⁸

The message here is in some ways analogous to Frik's use of the gharib: speak well of gharibs, cherish the virtue of hospitality, or risk the fate of becoming a gharib yourself. But where did this conception of the gharib come from? Why use the word 'gharib' here and not simply another word in the Classical Armenian lexicon? This section will provide some possible clues, arguing that a widespread understanding of the gharib existed across literary cultures and communities in Rūm at the time. Furthermore, this section will begin to make the argument that there are grounds to consider any 'popular' understanding of the gharib in Middle Armenian was not explicitly 'Armenian' in nature or origin, but rather, much like the gharib itself, informed a greater episteme which intersects with literary production in a variety of languages. As we will now see, the thread which runs between Frik, Yovhannēs Erznkats'i, *Varqa va Golshāh*, and the *History of the Youth Farman* is this virtue of being hospitable towards strangers, which even the romance's villains recognize as important.

In fact, the theme of exile and emigration is one of the central motifs of the *History of the Youth Farman*, and the figure of the gharib plays a prominent role in many

³³⁸ Yovhannēs Erznkats'i, *Hovhannes Erznkats'i* [sic]: *Usumnasirut'yun ev Bnagrer*, edited with introduction by Armenuhi Srapyan (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR GA Hratarakch'ut'yun, 1958), 154. Varak Nersissian also has a translation of this poem, which he includes as part of a brief overview of literary works dedicated to the gharib in Armenian. Nersissian argues that "there can be no doubt that the theme of the migrant and of emigration was first cultivated and perfected in the Near East, by Armenian poets." Yet, as this dissertation has labored to demonstrate, poetry on the 'gharib' cannot so easily be circumscribed to a single people or language, even though not every literary text on the 'gharib' is the same. See Varak Nersissian, "Medieval Armenian Poetry and Its Relation to Other Literatures," in *Review of National Literatures: Armenia* 13 (1984): 93-120.

of the romance's central scenes. However, before we read this romance through the eyes of the gharib, we need to understand how the romance, like the gharib itself, spans many worlds. The oldest known manuscript of the *History* (ms. 3595) is housed in the Matenadaran, or manuscript library, in Yerevan, Armenia, and it dates to the 15th century, although scholars have suggested its composition could predate the manuscript as early as the 13th century. While the work seems to have been popular throughout the medieval period and was copied several times, its author or authors remain unknown.

We should begin by noting that the romance has a few obvious connections to other literary conventions and languages. Most notably, the *History* positively brims over with Persian and Arabic words. The protagonists of the romance all have Persian names, from the hero Farmani Asman (The Order of Heaven), his love interest T'achi Dawr (Crown of Heaven), the villain P'olati Hindi (Hindi of Steel), Farman's companion P'ayip'ar (Winged of Foot), and others. Furthermore, all of these names have extant variants in Ferdowsi's *Shāh-nāma*, as Russell has discovered. Even a name which already existed in Classical Armenian, Moses (Movsēs), appears here in the Arabo-Persian form, Musē (Mūsa), as it is in the Qur'ān. The poem also mentions significant Arabo-Persian concepts in a cursory way, such as *adab*, the cultivation of a certain ethical set of behaviors, or *āhl-e qalam*, people of the pen.³³⁹ But perhaps most conspicuously, the romance makes absolutely no mention of Armenians: Farmani Asman is from Assyria, and most of the plot takes place in Khorāsān.

³³⁹ For a sense of how Persian words and even expressions informed the *History*, consider the following passage, whose rhymes are all in Persian:

“[Farman] says: ‘May you see mercy [*k'aram*] and kindness [*lut 'v*] and chivalry [*yatap*],
Behold, in the middle of the night, for me dawned the sun's light [*avt 'ap*],
I was deep in sleep, without concern in dream [*pēkuman tarkhap*],
She spoke to me, the sweet sugar-lipped one [*shirin shak'ērlap*].”

Not surprisingly, this has led to considerable debate on whether the romance was Persian in origin, with the early European Armenologists generally adopting the viewpoint that the Armenian *History* must have been a translation, and the majority of scholars in the last century coming down on the opposite side. These latter arguments usually draw attention to at least two different points: 1) no Persian manuscript of the romance has been found; and 2) the language of the romance is extremely simple, largely unadorned, and highly reflective of the language of other medieval Armenian poets.³⁴⁰ We must therefore examine these arguments in order to begin locating the romance, and hence, the gharib, within the larger tapestry of literary production in this region.

First, while the romance was written down in Armenian, the work itself calls attention to the orality and musicality of a wide variety of songs and ‘poetry,’ which perhaps complicates the importance of finding an ur-text of the *History* either in Armenian or Persian. We are told, for instance, that when Farman was a young boy, he “loved the sound [zdzayn] of songs and melodies,” and that he “kept many lessons of the minstrels [gusanats’].”³⁴¹ Minstrels [gusank’] specifically, and the circulation of oral ‘secular’ music generally, must have fairly commonplace at least in the Cilician region around this time, as Mkhitar Gosh condemned their appearance in monasteries in his 13th century *Lawcode*, which posited that the sound of minstrels and singing girls is “horrible for Christians to hear, let alone see.”³⁴² Gosh wanted to keep these worlds separate, but the very fact that he adopted such a position perhaps indicates that ‘secular’

Shushanik Nazaryan, ed., *Patmut’iwn Farman Mankann: (Mijnadaryan Poem)* (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR GA Hratarakch’ut’yun, 1957), 113.

³⁴⁰ For an outline of these debates, see *Ibid.*, 15-23.

³⁴¹ Nazaryan, *Patmut’iwn Farman Mankann*, 65.

³⁴² Mkhitar Gosh, *The Lawcode (Datastanagirk’) of Mxit’ar Gosh*, trans. Robert W. Thomson (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 254-5.

and ‘sacred’ literary and musical cultures had already bled together at this period in time. Certainly, Gosh was writing just before poets such as Frik and Kostandin Erznkats ‘i began to incorporate Persian or Islamic forms of entertainment into a Christian framework, which they voiced in the ‘rustic’ language of the periphery, the ‘village.’

Russell, noting that no Persian origin of the romance has been found, suggests that “perhaps this is a paraphrase of a Persian original, rather than a translation, for the milieu is not that of a Christian monastery.”³⁴³ Of course, this is only a suggestion, but without a preexisting Persian manuscript, Russell’s hypothesis certainly addresses the explicitly Persian elements of the story, as well as lack of ‘Armenian’ signifiers. If that is true, it may mean that one of the first gharib songs in the Armenian language was also a loose adaptation of a preexisting oral song in the Persian language. In fact, we already know that such songs existed in both Oghuz Turkish and Persian: Yunūs Emre wrote a devotional *ilahi*, or hymn, which described the subjective state of the Sūfī through the figural language of the gharib, and Rūmī played the “gharib’s rebec [*rābāb-e gharīb*]” for his iconoclastic detractors who questioned the use of musical instruments in religious practice, as we saw in chapter two. What may be even more important than the question of origins, however, is the fact that this ‘colloquial’ poetic language was not limited by any means to this single romance.

This brings us to the second argument of why many scholars think the romance is Armenian in origin: its close relationship with other Armenian poetry. As it turns out, a few stanzas within the *History* are either nearly identical or closely paraphrased versions

³⁴³ James Russell, “The Šāh-nāme in Armenian Oral Epic,” in *Armenian and Iranian Studies* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1067. For an overview of the *History* and English translation, see also James Russell, “The History of the Youth Farman (Patmut’iwn Farman Mankann): A Mediaeval Armenian Romance,” 809-850, in the same volume.

of many other Armenian poets, including those later clergymen in the Armenian church who began to compose poetry in Middle Armenian. Shushanik Nazaryan even makes an apt comparison between the *History* and Aṙak‘el Baghishets‘i, whose gharib poetry we will later examine.³⁴⁴ Consider this passage from a poem by Aṙak‘el:

I look at the animals, that [their] births are increasing,
I know the birds of the sky—[their] flocks are innumerable.
I look at the beasts, which are multiplying,
I turn and look at myself—my life is unnecessary.

There is no one who will be our inheritor after our death,
There is no comforter for us, no delight for our heart,
We are old and [our] portion of time has passed,
Our days have decreased in this world.

Now compare with the analogous stanza in the *History*:

I look at the beasts, that [their] births are increasing,
I see that the animals are multiplying,
I observe the birds of the sky—[their] flocks are innumerable,
I turn and look at myself—my life is ruined [*haram*].

There is no one who will be the inheritor of my crown and throne,
There is no comforter for me, a delight for my heart.
I am old, and my portion of time has passed,
My days have decreased in this world.

In other words, these poets ‘voiced’ nearly identical stanzas, but to serve different contexts. Nazaryan draws further other parallels between the *History* and the work of

³⁴⁴ Nazaryan, *Patmut‘iwn Farman Mankann*, 21-2.

other medieval poets, such as the 16th century Grigoris Aght‘amarts‘i, who used Persian phrases in his ‘Tagh Siroy,’ or love song, and elsewhere sang of disguising himself as a dervish to glimpse his beloved on a pilgrimage to Mecca.³⁴⁵ As we will later see, much of the song on gharibs in the *History* is reflected directly in work of Mkrtych‘Naghsh as well.

I would therefore suggest that these ‘reflections’ of the *History* in the work of subsequent Armenian poets at least indicate one of two things. First, these later poets were familiar with the *History*, which seems likely given its popularity, and they employed similar phrasing from the romance in the contexts of their own work. Second, and what I think is even more probable, these later poets drew from the same underlying literary conventions and semiotics which informed the composition of the *History* to begin with. In other words, the author(s) of the *History* gave voice to *widely familiar* literary conventions and semiotics which were not necessarily unique to Middle Armenian as a literary language, but rather intersected with a multiplicity of literary conventions spanning a variety of languages.

Therefore, it would be productive to examine in what ways the *History* in general—and the emergence of gharib poetry within the romance in particular—may have resonated with a wider audience on the ‘periphery’ of literary production in Classical Armenian, which was confined to the most educated strata of society. We can achieve this by turning to the plot of the romance itself, paying particular attention to the presence of the gharib while drawing connections between similar literary works in Greek, Armenian, and Persian in the region. The romance begins with the aging king of

³⁴⁵ See James Russell, “An Armeno-Persian Love Poem of Grigoris Aght‘amarts‘i,” *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, 6 (1992-93): 99-105.

Assyria [*Asorestan*], who, despite his best efforts, is unable to father a child. At his wit's end, the king descends from his throne, prays to God, and passes the day in tears. Finally, after the king bestows alms and goods to the poor, lamenting that even birds and beasts have offspring, a "wise person" and "diviner and astrologer of the heavenly sphere" suddenly appears within his kingdom.³⁴⁶

The king's servants send for this 'wise person,' and when he arrives, the king orders him to sit across from him, face-to-face [*tēm iwr yantiman*]. After much feasting and drinking wine, the king begins to make inquiries of his wise guest, a widely recognizable religious figure who possesses divine prestige:

He [the king] says: "Sir, whence do you come, or from which country?"

He replied: "My country is Egypt."

[The king] says, "From which people [*azgē*], or what is your name?"

He replied: "From the Hebrews, my name is Moses [*Musē*, as opposed to the Armenian *Movsēs*]

[The king] says, "Which art do you know, or what thing [*ban*]?"

He replied: "I am an astrologer and doctor [*bzhshkakan*]."

[The king] says, "How do you know the circumvolution of the stars?"

He says: "Like I know my own family."

[The king] says, "Since you are a doctor [*bzhishk*], give me medicine."³⁴⁷

The king then relates a dream to Moses, who acts as his interpreter. Moses declares good tidings: the king will soon have a son, who will have a solar birth [*shamsin*]. Not only will this son be "unmatched in beauty," with "golden-yellow hair," "luminous like the sun" and be "full of beauty and grace, like a fiery [being]," he will also be "a great

³⁴⁶ Nazaryan, *Patmut' iwn Farman Mankann*, 54.

warring [*paterazmakan*] king.”³⁴⁸ Of course, Moses also gives a warning: the king’s son, Farmani Asman, would “wander as an émigré in a foreign land [*pandukht shrji i yōtarut‘ ean*].” This prognostication is later fulfilled in the plot of the romance, after Farman learns “all the doors of wisdom,” “the letters of the Hebrew people,” and the “orbit and form of the stars” from Moses.

Already, several patterns emerge between the *History* other literary works popular in Rūm. Russell has noted that the *History* in general bears similarities to the structure of many Persian romances, and that later episodes in the romance resemble “the episode of Sohrāb’s combat at the White Castle,” which he argues made it “possible that the latter was one of its several sources, though the elements are general enough that this suggestion must remain a hypothesis.”³⁴⁹ Russell makes a further connection between the opening of the *History* and the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance*, which was translated into Armenian from the Psuedo-Callisthenes text in the 5th century. In the *Alexander Romance*, a magician and ruler of Egypt, Nectanabos, likewise predicts the birth of Alexander to Phillip. However, it should be noted that Nectanabos appears in the *Alexander Romance* as a trickster figure—disguised as a god, he goes to bed with Alexander’s mother, enabling him to impregnate her with the future world-conquerer. While the *Shāh-nāma*’s version of the *Alexander Romance* does not have a Nectanabos character, another comparison might be made between the *History* and the opening of a different Persian work: Rūmī’s *Maṣnavī*, which also drew heavily from widely resonant narrative forms and poetic tropes in this greater region.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 56-7.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 59-62.

³⁴⁹ James Russell, “The Šāh-nāme in Armenian Oral Epic,” 1067.

We should recall that the *Maṣnavī* opens with the story of a king who falls in love with a handmaiden, kidnaps her, and then falls deathly ill as she pines away for her home. At his own wit's end, the king “raced barefoot and frenzied to the mosque,” where he “entered the mosque and prostrated himself by the *mehṛāb*, eyes brimming with tears.” In a dream, he learned that a gharib would come to him the next day, a “sagacious doctor” who is “honest and loyal.”³⁵⁰ True enough, the following morning, a “scholarly person decked in opulence, a sun [*shams*] amongst the shadows” appeared to him, and face-to-face, begins to administer his remedy.³⁵¹ Later, this wise doctor is revealed to be none other than Kheẓr, the immortal Islamic saint who is popularly recognized as Moses' own teacher in the Qur'ān.

While I am not suggesting that the author(s) of the romance used Rūmī's *Maṣnavī* as a source—the functions of the two works are, of course, entirely different—the thread which runs between the opening of the *Maṣnavī*, the *History*, and the *Alexander Romance* points to a similar manner of communicating *dissimilar* ideas through recognizable figures and narrative structures. As I argued in chapter one, Rūmī was highly aware of the need to communicate with his diverse local audience in an accessible manner—an enticing poetic ‘voice’—which utilized literary and musical forms which were already well known. What the opening of the *Maṣnavī* and the *History* may have in common, then, is that they both drew from conventional narrative frames, such as the appearance of a sagacious ‘doctor’ in disguise, which cut across a variety of languages in this region, including Greek, Persian, Turkish, and Armenian. Those familiar ‘frames’ and poetic conventions could then serve very different ends, such as introducing the social and

³⁵⁰ Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Maṣnavī-ye Ma'navī*, ed. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, vol. 1 (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1984), 48.

theological aims of the *Masnavī* by drawing the listener into to a simultaneously recognizable and uncanny world, or in merely setting the stage for an adventure in Khorāsān, as is the case in the *History*.

We can now turn to the *gharib* itself, which similarly cuts across multiple poetic ‘voices,’ literary languages, and understandings of hospitality. The plot of the *History*, like the plot of many European and Persian romances, involves a quest in a foreign land to win the love of a foreign woman, and therefore the concept of ‘*gharibut‘iwn*,’ the state of being a *gharib*, figures heavily into the plot’s construction. To resume our story, Farman grows rapidly, defeating “many brave men [*p‘ahlawank‘*]” who “came from foreign lands [*yōtar yashkharhē*]” to fight with “the son of the king [*p‘atshahzadayin*],” but none of these challengers could “seize his belt.”³⁵² One day, however, Farman dreams of a woman from Khorāsān who vanquishes him in battle. When he wakes, he consults his books to divine the dream’s meaning:

He asked, “What does it mean to be beaten by a woman in a dream?”
[The book] says: “It is to go abroad [*pankhtut‘iwn*] in Khorāsān.”
He asked, “Concerning what things is there perdition there for me?”
[The book] says: “Concerning love, from a foreign people [*i yōtar azgē*].”³⁵³

Farman then rises and begs his father and mother for permission to leave, saying he must go into a foreign land [*ōtarut‘iwn*]. While his father offers Farman much wealth to take on his journey, the youth refuses, noting that “neither wealth [*mal*] nor treasure [*khazinay*] is necessary for me,” and instead he requests his companions, who are wise

³⁵¹ Ibid., 48.

³⁵² Nazaryan, *Patmut‘iwn Farman Mankann*, 67.

³⁵³ Ibid., 70.

and prudent [*khelōk' ew khikar*] to join him.³⁵⁴ Finally, after traveling a “road difficult and long,” he arrives in Khorāsān and disguises himself as a doctor [*bzhishk*] who can tell men’s fortunes from the stars, just like Moses.³⁵⁵ In reply, the king of Khorāsān similarly wonders at the origins of this strange doctor:

[The king] says: “Let me see, which tribe are you from [*or du aslizate es*].”
He answered: “I am a gharib, how would you know me?”
[The king] says: “From which country, whence have you come?”
He answered: “From a Distant Land [*Herāstanē*], which you have not seen.”³⁵⁶

Over and over, the coterie of Farman either identifies themselves as gharibs or are called gharibs by others. In so doing, these ‘gharibs’ subtly evoke the virtue of being hospitable to strangers, which Frik represented in the phrase “gharib dawst,” and their hosts respond in kind. Significantly, we do not see the same claim being extended through the Armenian words for stranger, foreigner [*ōtar*] or émigré [*pandukht*]. For example, after declaring himself a gharib before the king, Farman is led to celebrations and contests in his honor. During these contests, he battles with many other brave men, including the romance’s villain, P’ōlati Hindi, the leader of the Persian army. However, P’ōlat does not want to battle with Farman:

P’ōlat said to Farman, “Listen.”
Farman said to P’ōlat, “Command.”
[P’ōlat] said, “Your beautiful visage prohibits me.”
[Farman] said, “Do not have compassion, only you [try to] best me.”

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 74-5.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 78.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 81.

[P'olat] said: "You are a gharib, from a foreign land."
[Farman] said: "Try not to be beaten by [this] boy."³⁵⁷

Only after Farman gives P'olat permission to battle with him, a gharib, does the match continue (Farman, of course, prevails). During the battle, however, the king's daughter spies Farman, and like the Shah who became enamored with the handmaiden at first sight in the *Masnavi*, falls madly in love in an instant. She writes to him, begging for an audience, for he is a literate man of the pen [*ahli ghalam e*].³⁵⁸ Farman desires to meet with her as well, but he fears the wrath of the king, with whom he otherwise was on good terms. In a similar way, he evokes his own status as a gharib in an attempt to negotiate his own safety, writing:

But I, out of fear of the great king,
Do not wish that the desires of my heart be fulfilled.
But if you want [that which is done] in secret to be uncovered,
You desire to make the King spill my blood.

A thousand times, I am in your trust [*amanat'*]. Am I not a gharib
From a foreign country? I am from a distant land.³⁵⁹

In the end, this supplication fails, and she begins to visit him in the middle of the night. However, Farman's fears are realized when a complication arises on her second visit. P'olat, still jealous from his defeat at the hand of Farman, interrupts the lovers in the middle of the night in order to murder his opponent. This forces Farman to slay P'olat to

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 91.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 99.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 106. See also my discussion of the figure of the gharib in the Persian and Turkish tale of *Varqa va Golshah* in chapter two.

save his own life, which makes the king furious until he hears a more detailed explanation. Knowing his life is in danger, Farman again evokes his status as a gharib:

[Farman] says, “Whatever you desire, the command is yours,
I am a gharib, abandoned, in a foreign land.”
[The king] says, “[P‘ōlat] is the chief of the Persian people.”³⁶⁰

Instead of executing Farman, the king puts him into prison in order to keep him safe from the enraged Persians. At the same time, Farman’s companion, P‘ayip‘ar, begins to raid the camps of his Persian enemies. As already noted, P‘ayip‘ar gains the trust of these Persians by sweetly reciting songs and Persian qasidas. He, too, uses his status as a gharib to spend the night with his unknowing enemies: “he begged and said, “Give room for the gharib, I do not have another place, save for your command.”³⁶¹ In each of these mentions of ‘gharibs,’ there is always a power differential: the gharib poses as a figure who has no power—despite the fact that Farman and his companions are invincible in nearly everything they undertake—and the nominally ‘powerful’ actor is expected to provide whatever the gharib needs. This basic assumption about how one should treat gharibs runs through every single one of these encounters without being explicitly stated. We might reasonably conclude that the audience of the romance would also understand, and therefore share, this unspoken assumption about the virtues of being ‘gharīb-dūst,’ which existed within a broader mentalité in Rūm that cut across different social strata, languages, and religions.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 132.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 137.

The final appearance of ‘gharibs’ in the text happens near the end of the narrative, and is also the most crucial. After these events have transpired, Farman then escapes from prison, flees with his companions, and is even reunited with his love in a distant fortress. Despite Farman’s complete and utter victory, he suddenly bursts into tears, leading him to recite one of the earliest songs about gharibs in Armenian:

And Farman Recites a Ban Concerning His Exile [*Gharibut’ean*]

Farman was sitting one day with his companions [*unkerōk’ n*],
Happy and desirous, he was conversing sweetly,
When suddenly it happened—Farman was weeping and sobbing,
Saying, “I remembered my parents; my father and mother.”

He grieved from his heart, distressed to his very core.
He sighed so pitifully, without end, throughout the day;
Saying: “Should whatever is here—mountain and valley and stone—
Turn to gold for me, I am [still] a gharib and a foreigner [*ōtar*].”

Should the gharib be lord of many cities,
That near him, greatness never [be] lacking,
His heart is always in dread, for “I am forlorn [*antēr*],
I have no friend here, no perfect [*katareal*] love.”

[His] spirit severely desires and [his] heart is willing,
The poor one [*aghk’at*] roams the land, consenting to his heart:
In the place of sugar, bile. He swallows poison.
He considers it sugar; it seems sweet to him.

The gharib, who has come to a foreign land [*i yōtar ashkharh ekeal ē*],
Is not even accepted by the earth, which has not become suitable [to him]
[*sazgar*],
And should he be as wise with prudence as Solomon,
He appears a fool to men, he is half-drunk [*khumar*] and stupid.

If the gharib be rich and wealthy,

Extremely replete and complete in the necessities of the world,
He is always worn with worry, much anguish and sorrow [*ghusa u gham*]:
That “death not come and enslave [me], and I not reach my place.”

And if suddenly his pains arrive,
Or the mark of death is foretold on him,
He looks miserably at things hidden and revealed,
He requests his father and mother, his beloved brother.

His body, which took its birth from his earth,
Is desirous and parched—it requests [its] mother—
Should death capture him and he turn back to earth,
One of foreign [*ōtar*] birth is imprisoned in a foreign [*ōtar*] land.

Here I am in longing, thirsty, and my heart fading,
I want my parents, I want to see [them],
Behold, the hour is upon us to rise from here,
As we desire to think and find a way.³⁶²

This song introduces themes into ‘gharib’ literature which we haven’t seen previously in either Persian or Turkish. Notably, the absence and separation from family members, especially one’s parents—who are linked to one’s region of birth—is an altogether different articulation of the gharib than we have observed in the case of Rūmī, Solṭān Valad, ‘Āşīk Paşa, and Yūnus Emre. Nor does this gharib make any claim to a kind of spiritual authority, which was one of the primary functions of the gharib in those other Persian and Turkish works. This is a gharib song which seems firmly about exile in *this* world, not exile from God or the next life. Most notably, unlike subsequent Armenian articulations of the gharib, the song is entirely lacking of any overtly Christian content.

It also might be observed that tonally, this song does not match the overall victorious mood of the *History*. After all, even when Farman reaches his nadir in prison,

he still enjoys the protection of the king by asserting his status as a gharib, and his companions are still able to humiliate and rob his enemies. Immediately after singing this song, Farman simply returns home, marries his beloved, and finally exacts his revenge on the Persian army and countryside. Furthermore, while the narrative of the *History* helps to contextualize the beginning and ending of the gharib's lament, there is not much about this song which is explicitly particular to Farman's situation, either. While Farman was moved to sing of the plight of exile, it may not have been an expression of his exile only, but rather he may have been 'recalling' a popular way of representing exile and emigration in poetry or song, whether in Armenian or Persian.

Certainly, there are a few common ways in which different authors depicted the figure of the 'gharib' in Rūm, even when their reasons for doing so were different. For example, the gharib in this poem is less concerned with his material well-being (he is described as both "rich" and "poor") than with his separation from loved ones. At a basic level, we ought to remember that this is how Rūmī and Solṭān Valad defined the gharib, as it was separation from God that made one an exile, not distance from another geographic location or one's economic status. Another similarity can be found in the comparison between the gharīb and King Solomon, who obviously is an important figure in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. As we have seen in chapter one, the 'gharīb' frequently represented someone with hidden esteem and divine prestige, such as the Prophet Moḥammad, Kheẓr, or even Rūmī himself. Similarly, in this Armenian ban, others do not recognize the true value of the gharīb.

Other extremely general patterns can be found in Farman's song and the gharib in Turkish ilahis by Yūnus Emre, which we examined in chapter two. For instance, the

³⁶² Ibid., 166-170.

‘Armenian’ gharib is always full of anguish and sorrow [*ghusa u gham*] that he will not reach his destination before death comes. What is certain, then, is that there is no relief for gharibs so long as they remain separated from what they seek. In an entirely different context, Yūnus Emre expresses a similar sentiment when he declares:

My tongue speaks, my eyes weep, my core grieves for garībs.
Perhaps my star in heaven is such a garīb like me.

How long shall I burn with this pain— till death come one day and I die?
Perhaps in my grave I’ll find such a garīb like me.³⁶³

Again, in drawing attention to these general patterns in representations of the gharib, I am not implying that the author(s) of the *History* made recourse to the *Maṣnavī*, Yūnus Emre’s *Dīvān*, or other similar works on the gharib. Rather, my point in this entire study is again to emphasize that these authors were invested in similar communicative strategies: they subtly wove *some* of the ways their audiences already communicated—both in terms of content, medium, and form—which they revoiced in a new orbit of meaning-making. Because the *History* reflects this ongoing processes of negotiating form and content across different communities and sometimes even languages, the gharib was arguably also part of this process.

This brings us to our final and most important point about Farman’s exilic song—the fact that it is identified as such, as a poem or song. As the oldest manuscript notes, Farman was “reciting a *ban*,” which means *logos* in Armenian, and had particular associations with poetic composition. As Russell has noted, Frik called his own poetry

³⁶³ Yūnus Emre, *Yunus Emre Divānı*, ed. Mustafa Tatçı, vol. 2 (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990), 361.

‘bans,’ for instance, as did the 11th century Cilician poet and giant of Armenian letters, Grigor Narekats‘i. In other words, by drawing attention to the fact that the gharib’s lament is a *ban*, Farman was not simply conversing with his companions as part of the overall narrative of the romance, but rather was reciting a poetic work in a stylized manner. Like his companion P‘ayip‘ar, the character of Farman may be ‘voicing’ a preexisting poetic work and making it speak to his own immediate circumstances, which explains why the song does not speak more about his own situation, as well as why we can find later Armenian poets ‘revoicing’ a similar set of tropes and expressions in new ways. Not only is this one of the earliest known Armenian poems dedicated solely to the gharib, but it is the first instance we have in Armenian literature of gharibs consuming and reciting songs together about *their own condition as gharibs*, even if they used a stylized language, musical form, and the common poetic tongue to achieve this task.

Farman therefore provides us with a model for reading the subsequent emergence of the Armenian gharib in the works of Aṙak‘el Baghishets‘i and Mkrtych‘ Naghash, who also composed similar poems about the gharib to address their own contemporary situations, but through an overtly Christian framework. On an even broader scale, the example of Farman helps us conceive of this culture of ‘voicing’ new poetic and musical works which speak to contemporary audiences on their own terms. In this sense, the figure of gharibs ‘voicing’ poetry to each other becomes an apt metaphor for how subsequent authors conceived of the entire Armenian people as exiles, scattered far and wide across the globe, and consequently had to find effective ways of addressing these disparate groups.

Finally, none of this means, at all, that Armenian-speaking poets, even the anonymous author(s) of the *History of the Youth Farman*, were reductively ‘copying’ the gharibs of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish music and poetry. Much about the Armenian gharib is entirely different from other Anatolian strangers, and I will attempt to explain why in the next section by weaving the gharib’s story into the rich body of Armenian colophons, which provide a treasure trove of historical information beyond traditional histories or chronicles. These colophons reveal life on the periphery of emerging empires and polities, and thus depict the political and social dimensions of living in *gharibut’ iwn*— not only as an Armenian, but also as a Persian, Jew, Kurd, Arab, Greek, or Turk.

Hence, the next section will examine historical representations of Armenian dispersion in particular, as well as present the case for a *shared experience* of emigration, dispersion, migration, estrangement, and exile. This shared experience adds a complicating layer to any attempt to neatly chart the ‘migration’ of the gharib along a linear path from neighboring traditions into Armenian, as it further suggests that just as these Armenian bishops found it useful to ‘christianize’ the gharib, there is no reason to believe that Persian and Turkish poets were not similarly tapping into ‘popular’ understandings of estrangement, even while weaving that understanding into preexisting Islamic discourses on gharibs. One of the implications of a partially shared ‘exilic’ experience, I will argue, is that there may be grounds for thinking that the gharib existed in Rūm on a ‘popular’ oral or musical level which transcended *some* linguistic, although not political or confessional, boundaries. Consequently, this shared history, further underscored by a shared *mentalité* and by the intersecting literary conventions which cut

across individual languages, can further help us to understand the larger picture of how these literatures developed alongside, in concert with, and in opposition to one another within this polyvocal geographic space.

4. Universal Strangers, Confessional Boundaries

Grigor Khlat'ets'i (1349-1425) provides us with some of the best evidence for a shared exilic experience between Armenians, Persians, and Turks in the period of time immediately preceding Aṛak'el Baghishets'i and Mkrtych' Naghash. Just as importantly, Khlat'ets'i, who founded the monastic school at Tsip'nay Vank', provides us with a clear example of how the problem facing Nersēs Shnorhali some two centuries earlier — how to maintain the integrity of one's scattered flock — had become one of the preeminent issues of the day by the late 14th and early 15th centuries. As we will see, a major dimension of this concern was the loss of confessional boundaries, and hence the Christian faith, in the wake of great demographic upheaval and a prolonged series of foreign invasions. We ought to remember that while figures like Nersēs Shnorhali and Mkhit'ar Gosh were writing in a period of relative peace and stability, Khlat'ets'i and his contemporaries were facing the devastating campaigns of Tamerlane in the region, not to mention the constant warring between various Turkic tribes, such as the Āq Qoyunlū and Qarā Qoyunlū peoples.

Previously, we have examined a literary strategy for communicating with lay audiences beyond centers of monastic or courtly learning, particularly in the poetry of Kostandin Erznkats'i and Frik, who by their own admissions did not study long under a

vardapet in a monastery. We have also examined Middle Armenian as a literary language in the context of popular romances, such as *History of the Youth Farman*, which utilized widespread literary conventions found in Rūm and was largely devoid of Christian theology or cosmology. However, during the late 14th and 15th centuries, we find erudite members of the Armenian church, even bishops near constantly embattled regions like Khlat', beginning to address their audiences directly in the poetic and literary language of Middle Armenian. Khlat'ets'i allows us to envision more clearly why poems and songs about gharibs would have been highly resonant during this time period, as well as why later figures in the Armenian church adapted figures like the gharib in their own literary production. In broader terms, I will argue that the adoption of the gharib by the Armenian church in part helps to tell the greater story of why these early clergymen had begun to employ similar literary strategies, as they needed to communicate with their scattered flock in widely resonant ways. The gharib is only a small part of this greater story, but it also allows us to glimpse an aspect of this larger decision facing clergymen at this time: either compose new poetic and musical works in a literary language understandable by the lay populace, and hence become competitive with non-Christian works in both Middle Armenian and other literary languages, or hazard the further breakdown of the confessional boundaries of the church.

Hence, this section will seek to locate the historical and confessional concerns of Grigor Khlat'ets'i in the subsequent literary production of Aṙak'el Baghishets'i and Mkrtich' Naghash, who were both important figures of the Armenian church, both born in the same eastern Anatolian village, and were both the earliest clergymen to adopt the gharib in their own poetry within an explicitly Christian context. While Mkrtich'

Naghash in particular is often credited with ushering in the theme of exile and emigration in Armenian letters, I will suggest that rather than creating new poetry or music about gharibs, he rather represents an attempt to shift the framework in which gharibs were interpreted. Despite the fact that Mkhit'ar Gosh advocated the separation of monastic life and 'secular' forms of entertainment several centuries earlier, these later authors arguably welcomed 'popular' forms of entertainment into their own literary production, much in the same way that Şūfī lodges in Rūm had begun to incorporate Christian iconography in certain regions to draw in diverse audiences. Therefore, I will build upon my previous arguments to suggest that these authors framed the gharib within a Christian worldview in part to better address their dispersed audiences, again in terms which were already understood.

We can now turn to Grigor Khlat'ets'i's colophon, which he wrote in 1422 at the end of a *gandzaran* [*treasury*]. In many ways, Grigor Khlat'ets'i lived in a fundamentally heterogeneous and multifaceted world. In fact, when the eleventh century Persian poet Nāşer Khosraw traveled through the city of Khlat', or present-day Ahlat, he marveled at the cosmopolitan feel of the city. Nāşer Khosraw wrote in his *Safar-nāma* that not only was pork and lamb sold in the bazaar, but people drank wine publicly in the shops,³⁶⁴ even though this is forbidden by Islam. Even more importantly, Nāşer Khosraw noted that Arabic, Persian, and Armenian were the dominant languages in this city, and even speculated that the city got its name 'Akhlāt' from the Arabic verb '*khalāṭa*,' meaning to mix together. Consequently, when Grigor Khlat'ets'i talks about a shared exilic experience that befell Armenians, Persians, and Turks during his own lifetime, we ought

³⁶⁴ Nāşer-e Khosraw, *Nāşer-e Khosraw's Book of Travels (= Safarnāma)*, trans. W. M. Thackston (Albany, N.Y.: Bibliotheca Persica, 1986), 6.

to remember that this experience is obviously not the beginning of a shared lived experience between these peoples.

Grigor Khlat'ets'i begins his colophon in the year 1386, and then walks the reader through the various calamities that befell the region, providing the names of the military leaders who struggled to control the area over several generations. These initial invaders were perceived as wild and chaotic forces, such as the "barbarian people" led by "the king of the Huns, Tokhtamysh,"³⁶⁵ who came to Persia and historic Armenia and wreaked great havoc:

The blood of many flowed across the land,
And many froze in the snow.
Many fled out of their terror,
And many of them were slain in ditches.
Mothers forgot compassion for their sons,
And parents became the executioner of their children.
Many died from their sword
And many others were tortured.
Through this—through this evil labor
And through the loss of Armenia
Arrived another double-blow
Much more bitter than the first.
While we were still in this mourning,
The sound [*dzayn*] of sad news reached us:
The house of the Khvārazm was moved,
The universal race of Tatars,
The inheritors of Samarqand,
The estranged [*ōtar*] sons of Abraham
Entered [this] land all at once,
The throne of Atropatene.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁵ L. S. Khach'ikyan, ed., *XV Dari Hayeren Dzeragreri Hishatakaranner (1401-1450 T'.t'.)*. (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR Gitut'yunneri Akademiayi Hratarakch'ut'yun, 1955), 272.

Here, as in the case of Frik, to become estranged, represented through the Classical Armenian word ‘*ōtar*,’ could potentially have disastrous consequences for oneself and for others. Khlat‘ets‘i notes that the leader of this “evil legion” was Lang-Tamur, or Tamerlane. In the year 1387, Tamerlane’s forces utterly devastated this region:

Laid waste [to the land] and enslaved
The Persian people and the Armenian race,
They turned the land upside down,
They destroyed indiscriminately,
They gave men as fodder to their swords,
And enslaved the women.³⁶⁷

As these invasions spread through the Ayrarat‘ province, Caucasian Albania, and Georgia, where king Bagrat was forced to renounce his Christian faith, major calamities faced the entire population of the greater region. Khlat‘ets‘i goes to great lengths to reiterate this fact again and again, for Tamerlane’s armies “laid waste to the entire land in their comings and goings,” sparing neither Armenian nor Persian, commoner or noble, layman or bishop. Kars and Greater Siwnik were both devastated in the spring; centers such as Bjni and the fortress of Kaputits‘ were likewise decimated. But in addition to the torturous deaths which many people suffered, such as being flayed and burned alive, there was an additional problem, as “many rejected Christ and turned to the creed of Moḥammad.”³⁶⁸

This problem of conversion en masse to Islam was further exacerbated by another issue: widespread homelessness, impoverishment, and the immigration of refugees in

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 273.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 274.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 274.

large numbers to nearby regions. Khlat'ets'i paints a vivid picture of the dispersion of his people, to which he was a personal witness:

I do not have the words to say
What the Christians of the Armenian people endured.
My bones tremble and freeze,
My life fades, my heart constricts,
Because I have seen with my own eyes
Their heart-rending misfortune.
Many princes left their homes
And were stripped of their riches.
They were deprived of horses
And were taken on foot.
Boys along the road who
Were unable to go, died.
And the friars and monks,
Wandering, found no shelter.³⁶⁹

Many of these people died while traveling along the road; Khlat'ets'i notes that fathers wept openly for the loss of their children while young mothers shed the last of their milk in a futile attempt to spare their babies. But while Khlat'ets'i struggled to find a proper representational mode for describing such traumatic events, he made certain to observe that many different peoples joined together along the journey:

In need of bread, they wandered naked,
And followed along with bare feet.
There was no honor for the honorable
And no standard for the rich,
There was no bread for the bread distributor,
And no wine for the wine bibber,
And no horse for the horseman,

And no armor for the soldier.
Strangers roamed among strange places [*ōtark' yōtars shrjēin*],
And they begged for food.³⁷⁰

But who were these strangers? Most importantly for our purposes, while Khlat'ets'i makes sure to describe the ubiquitous suffering of different genders, age groups, and social classes, he again reiterates that this tribulation was common to the entire region, and not only to Armenians or Christians:

And this did not only happen to Christians,
But to the entire Tajik people,
For tribulation was common [*hasarak*]
To the Persian people, the Armenians, and Turks.³⁷¹

Significantly, this is not even the last time when Khlat'ets'i draws attention to such mutually experienced suffering. For instance, after Tamerlane's forces reached Amida [Diyarbakır], where Mkrtych' Naghash would later become bishop, these armies continued to “work many crimes” there and beyond, laying siege to Van, where “they destroyed the strong fortress, they bound the Armenian and Tajik,” until corpses piled up in great masses around the land.³⁷²

But why would Khlat'ets'i care to stress that these sufferings extended beyond Armenian Christians, or even Georgian Christians? To a certain extent, the simplest answer probably extends back to Nāṣer Khusraw's startling discovery that Armenians, Persians, and Arabs were living side-by-side in these regions in ways which transcended

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 276.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 276.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 277.

³⁷² Ibid., 277-8.

some sectarian practices, such as in the forbidden consumption of certain meats or wine. These peoples may not have shared the same religion, but their lives were intertwined with their neighbors in ways which could not be easily disarticulated. Destroying these peoples, even peoples of another religion, was part and parcel of the larger decimation of a way of life in eastern Rūm. As I have posited, some of those ways in which these lives were interconnected was through the creation of different, albeit sometimes shared, literary and musical cultures. We know that these Armenian, Persian, and Turkish “strangers” who “roamed among strange places” already possessed a mutually comprehensible literary and musical figure—the *gharib*—for articulating their collective plight. *Khlat‘ets‘i* also provides us with another reason why clergymen in the church would incorporate this ‘common’ *gharib* into their own musical and literary production, as we will now see.

Perhaps to reinforce this sense of an ending world, *Khlat‘ets‘i* saves his harshest condemnation for the commanders of armies which destroyed the regions adjacent to his own city, and he even employs apocalyptic language by calling his enemies the antichrist [*nerñ*], who serve the evil devil. He laments most of all over the fine youth of his own city, noting, “Oh, the beautiful appearance and visage of those fine youth who were lost, good and venerable house-holders, modest, superb, fine housewives, tall in height and good in type” who were slaughtered without a grave.³⁷³ These were people who had come to the region from other cities such as Khizan and Bitlis in order to work the fields as gleaners, and the invading armies carried more than 500 of these workers away as slaves—in effect, the region of *Khlat‘* already had a culture of emigres before these

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 283.

invasions happened, and these people were later deported. According to Khlat'ets'i, all of this brings us back to our central problem of confessional disintegration:

And others were driven into slavery,
Wandering in foreign [*ōtar*] lands,
Mixing with other peoples,
Learning their wickedness.
They became estranged [*ōtarats'an*] and fell away,
They forgot their homeland.
Not willingly, but unwillingly
These things happened to them.
Would that God would soften
And free them from there.
Those who encounter my little song [*ergakis*],
Remember pitiable me,
The drowsy Grigor Khlat'ets'i.³⁷⁴

Again, the problem facing Khlat'ets'i and his contemporaries was similar to, albeit more desperate than, the problem which faced Nersēs Shnorhali some two centuries earlier: how to preserve the confessional boundaries of the Armenian church, even in distant lands. Both the threat of dispersion and of potential conversion needed to be addressed in a variety of ways, and quickly, as the stakes of doing so successfully implicated the integrity of the church itself. Not surprisingly, the theme of exile, migration, and dispersion became more prominent in both poetic and theological works in Classical Armenian at the turn of the 15th century, although these works all came from academic or monastic centers. For instance, the longest poem written in Classical Armenian during this period, Aṙak'el Siwnets'i's *The Book of Adam* [*Atamgirk'*] concerns the permanent exile and wandering of Adam beyond the garden of Eden. Siwnets'i's uncle, the last of

the great Armenian Nominalists, Grigor Tat'ewats'i (1346-1409), sought to incorporate the different forms of contemporary social dispersion into a theological framework. In one of his famous exegetical works, *Amaṙan Hator*, Grigor Tat'ewats'i notes that there are seven categories of poor people, who in turn each present different opportunities for doing good works—further reflecting the mentalité of hospitality toward strangers which we observed in the *History*. The fifth category concerns those who have forsaken their original home:

The *ōtar* is a guest in need of gathering and a roof ('for I was a stranger [*ōtar*] and you comforted me'). The *pantukht* is he who has come from another province [*gawar*] into our midst. And he is in need of home and inheritance and other things. But the *nshteh* is he who has willingly quit his nation and homeland, and he wanders in a foreign area [*ōtarut' iwn*], without things, without people, without place, like the Son of God. But the *yek*, who has come [*yekal*] and dwells among us, is in need of faith, good works, council, and learning. It is necessary to be charitable, and even more so, to give them what is needed.³⁷⁵

Notably absent from Tat'ewats'i's taxonomy of dispersion is the *gharib*, and for good reason: this passage is written in immaculate Classical Armenian, and Tat'ewats'i's audience was both academic and priestly. Similarly, Aṙak'el Siwnets'i also wrote the *Book of Adam* in Classical Armenian, and he largely drew from biblical understandings of exile to convey a didactic message about the hardships of life in this world. Khlat'ets'i also joined their ranks by interpreting the dispersion of the Armenian people through a traditional understanding of theodicy, noting at the end of his colophon that these things befell the Armenian people on account of their being slothful, oath-breaking, jealous,

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 285.

³⁷⁵ Grigor Tat'ewats'i, *Amaṙan Hator* (Jerusalem: I Tparani Srbot's Hakobeants', 1998), 360.

neglectful of prayer, and gossipy. Because of their own wicked deeds, “our people were scattered everywhere,” Khlat‘ets‘i concludes.³⁷⁶

Yet arguably, another understanding of this problem had already taken root beyond the walls of monasteries and universities, and this understanding was based in the various communities which had been linguistically and ethnically heterogeneous for centuries. Even our colophon, written within the monastery, speaks to this fact, as Persians and Turks were an integral enough part of Armenian life that Khlat‘ets‘i felt compelled to mourn their destruction. After all, these were his neighbors, both in a local and regional sense, and he distinguished these Persians and Turks from the “legions of evil” which invaded eastern Rūm and the Caucasus from elsewhere. These calamities afflicted regional Armenians, Persians, and Turks equally, although their responses to those disasters were likely multifaceted and sometimes different from one another. Most importantly, as we have already seen, the figure of the gharib was common to all of these peoples in a broad sense, and not necessarily Christian or Islamic in orientation, as the *History of the Youth Farman* makes abundantly clear. The fact that the gharib appears in a minor way in other Anatolian romances, such as in the Turkish version of *Varqa va Gulshah* from this period, further underscores this point.

In other words, like Rūmī, Solṭān Valad, ‘Āṣīk Paşa, Yūnus Emre, Kostandin Erznkats‘i, and Frik, influential figures in the Armenian church would need to adapt not only a widely resonant literary language, but also an enticing style, or a comprehensible poetic ‘voice,’ in order to reach different audiences in an accessible manner. In fact, shortly after Khlat‘ets‘i himself was killed during an attack by Oṣman in 1425, we find one of his students employing such a strategy in his own literary production. That student

³⁷⁶ Khachik‘yan, *XV Dari Hayeren Dzeragreri Hishatakaranner*, 286.

was Aṙak‘el Baghishets‘i, a prolific poet, musician, and prelate of Erḳayn-Unḳuzyats' monastery. He was likely born around 1380, making him an eyewitness to the three invasions of Tamerlane into Armenian regions, which began in 1387 and ended in 1400. Baghishets‘i also supported the construction and renewal of monasteries during his own life, and he was an active figure in the Armenian church. He probably died in 1454 in Arghni, in the northwestern region of Diyarbakır, which had a monastery and fortress the local population could retreat within during the frequent and ongoing invasions throughout the early 15th century.

Furthermore, Baghishets‘i demonstrates that the practice of configuring widely resonant literary figures and forms within a Christian context continued to be an ongoing process. For instance, like Kostandin Erznkats‘i, Baghishets‘i likewise wrote a poem about the rose and nightingale which concludes with a brief explanation that the rose is the mother of Christ, and the nightingale is really the archangel Gabriel. The difference here, of course, is that whereas Kostandin had not studied much under a doctor of the church, Aṙak‘el was highly educated in the church. He could draw just as easily from a large body of canonical and theological texts in Classical Armenian to create his own songs and poetry, but rather he often chose to use popular literary forms and figures, such as the rose, nightingale, or gharib.

However, Aṙak‘el’s use of the Armenian language is not replete with Arabic, Persian, and Turkish loan words in the same way as in Kostandin’s poetry. In fact, in his sole ‘song,’ or *tagh*, on living a life in exile, the word ‘gharib’ is the only significant example of vocabulary not culled from the Classical Armenian lexicon. The song is as follows:

Tagh Gharipi [Song of the Gharib]

Living in a foreign land [*ōtarut' iwn*] is extremely hard,
No one does it willingly,
[Those who do] sigh unceasingly,
And yearn for death with their whole hearts.

The [exile] remembers the place of his youth
And his beloved friends,
His familial relations—
Mother, sister, and everyone.

Heart-broken, he weeps bitterly,
He fashions a lamentation of lamentations,
He remains melancholic on the earth,
He passes his days in tears.

Should he be wise as Khikar,
They consider him foolish, stupid,
Should he serve his [fellow] men,
They return a wicked retribution.

He appears vulgar [*ramik*] to all,
Uneducated, thoughtless, and small,
Men are not satisfied with his thought,
Although he speaks of eloquent things.

They say—you are a stranger [*ōtar*], shut up,
And don't be so bold in the court,
Or else we'll reduce you to ashes,
And you'll take a cudgel to the head.

For whether he be a lord or prince
Or a theological doctor [of the church],
All who face him desire
That they cause his demise.

And if they hear good things [*bans*]
Concerning the stranger [*ōtarin*], they praise him,
They turn the good into evil
And they spread around wicked things about him.

Light is as night to the gharib.
Sleep is cut short for the stranger [*yōtarin*],
Who never has rest
[Throughout his] sad, lamentable life.

For if he eats sugar,
He considers it bitter, vinegar,
And should he be dressed in muslin,
It is vile, unnecessary, and nothing.

Whatever the stranger [*ōtar*] says,
They say—he's a fool, he has no intellect.
And if he dares to give counsel,
They say he is impudent and prating.

Should he counsel like a scholar,
And speak of spiritual gain,
Men do not give him ear—
Instead, they ridicule him.

They say, You are abandoned,
An ugly and filthy vagrant,
Be quiet and still [lit., palm on your mouth],
The things [*bank'*] which you speak are worthless.

Fie, the life of gharib men,
Who envy everyone,
[Who] stand weeping the entire day,
Until the day of death arrives.

The émigré [*pandukht*] [spends] life trembling,
Paying with [this] transient life,
Bearing much reproach,
And not enduring it willingly.

And reaching the day [when]
The invitation of death arrives—
He pitifully casts his eyes about,
And desires the place of his birth.

Men, seeing him,
Do not listen to his voice.
He [is] fallen on his face
Yearning for cool water.

In the mournful day of death,
Saying woe! He gives up the ghost.
Taking the body of that stranger [*ōtarin*],
They take and place him in the grave.

And should he have good works,
He is comforted by Lazarus,
In the bosom of the great Abraham,
In whom the chosen are worthy.

Those who have gathered up sin [in this life]
And do not turn from evil,
Will be vexed in body there,
There they will inherit Hell.

I call on you pitifully,
All of you who listen,
Find me worthy to remember,
Aṛak‘el the stranger [*ōtarakan*].³⁷⁷

Structurally and conceptually, there are many similarities here between this *tagh* and the ban recited on gharibs in the *History of the Youth Farman*. Like Farman, the gharib here similarly “composes a lamentation of lamentations,” emphasizing the culture of

³⁷⁷ Aṛak‘el Baghishets‘i, *Aṛak‘el Baghishets‘i: XV Dar*, ed. Arshaluys Ghazinyan (Yerevan: Haykakan SSH Gitut‘yunneri Akademiayi Hratarakch‘ut‘yun, 1971), 184-7.

composing songs about exile. Similarly, in both works, the gharib is defined by his separation from loved ones, and not from a geographic place. There are other parallels between these two poems in addition. Whereas in the *History*, it did not matter if the gharib was “lord of many cities,” here it’s irrelevant whether the gharib is “a lord or prince or a theological doctor of the church.” The theme of the gharib’s ridicule is also present in both poems. In the *History*, we are told that “should he be as wise with prudence as Solomon, he appears a fool to men, sad and stupid.” In Aṛak‘el’s poem, “should he be wise as Khikar, they consider him foolish, stupid.” Finally, both poems end with the death of the gharib, who is to be buried in a strange land at the hands of strangers. This is how Yūnus Emre’s devotional hymn similarly ends, and as I have argued about Farman’s song, many of the very general topoi here can be found in Persian and Turkish poetry and music in Rūm from previous centuries.

However, unlike Turkish and Persian articulations of the gharib in Rūm, and even unlike other Armenian representations of the gharib, Aṛak‘el’s *tagh* concludes on an explicitly didactic and Christian note. Again, exactly like Armenian ‘christianizations’ of the rose and the nightingale, this didactic element is amended onto the end of the *tagh*. Prior to this moment, the *tagh* is both thematically and structurally similar to Farman’s own exilic song, but the short two stanzas at the end transform the work into an extension of the parable of poor Lazarus from the New Testament. In fact, in later centuries, manuscripts frequently contain songs about the gharib in Armenian alongside another popular poem about poor Lazarus, who is called an ‘émigré,’ or *pandukht*. What we see both within Aṛak‘el’s *tagh* and within these later manuscript songbooks is an attempt, I would suggest, to bring a popular way of thinking about exile and dispersion, rooted in

the multilingual figure of the *gharib*, into the theological and canonical constellation of the church.

This may be why Aṙak'el chose to preserve the word 'gharib' in his work rather than replace it with any number of other words in Classical Armenian, such as *pandukht*. The use of the word is made even more eye-catching by the fact that it is the only significant loan-word in the entire *tagh*. Again, I would suggest that Aṙak'el was not drawing from 'literary' or 'musical' models that were fundamentally rooted in the canonical literature of the Armenian church, but rather from this popular conception of living in exile, which he then wove into the warp and woof of Christian theology. Who is this *tagh* speaking to, if not to the communities (and more specifically, clergymen) with *gharibs* in their midst? And what is the message of the *tagh*, if not to urge *gharibs* to keep their faith and for Christian communities to labor to bring this itinerant populations back within the communal fold? As Khlat'ets'i noted in his colophon, not only were such displaced populations ubiquitous within and beyond the immediate region, but these 'strangers' were additionally in danger of leaving the Christian church.

Obviously this multifaceted problem had no one easy solution, but I would suggest that in employing a popular literary or musical form, especially a form which resonated beyond an Armenian 'christian' context and reinterpreting it to speak to this problem of incorporating *gharibs* into the Christian fold, Aṙak'el may have been attempting to address some of these larger problems facing the scattered Armenian communities in this region. What's more, Aṙak'el was not the only figure in the church, or even within this specific region, who chose to incorporate the *gharib* into their own literary and musical production for similar reasons. His contemporary, Mkrtych' Naghash,

who was bishop of Amida [Diyarbakır], likewise clothed the gharib in a Christian garb in order to better address both the problem of social and confessional cohesion within this same region. However, before we can address Naghash's configuration of the gharib, we first need to examine how he interacted with the heterogeneous communities around him, as this implicates how and why he wrote in a different literary register of Middle Armenian than Aṙak'el.

Unlike Aṙak'el, we know much about Mkr̄tich' Naghash from a lengthy colophon written by a priest named Astuatsatur. The colophon states that from a young age, Naghash, which means 'painter' in Persian, was enamored with learning, the arts of science, and clerical life.³⁷⁸ Constantly in pursuit of knowledge and the service of God, the young Naghash soon blossomed as an erudite priest and dextrous artist until the Holy Spirit decided to wed him to the Armenian church of the entire Mesopotamian region, which Naghash resided over as bishop in Amida sometime around 1420, five years before the execution of Khlat'ets'i. The colophon reports that "God opened the door of mercy to him, for every one who laid eyes upon him" desired to give their own lives and souls to aid him with "submission and joy and with abundant heart."³⁷⁹ The city of Amida did not comprise only Armenian Christians, of course. Astuatsatur reports that not only "Christian peoples," but also "Turk, and Tat, and Tatar, and Kurd, and Arab, and Jew, and every nation," would honor Naghash "upon seeing his honor," by preparing horse or donkey or mules of great worth to serve him. Other peoples reportedly would even gather from other dioceses and present Naghash with precious gems, silver, and gold.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ E. Khondkaryan, ed., *Mkr̄tich' Naghash* (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR GA Hratarakch'ut'yun, 1965), 202.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 203.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 203.

Soon, the colophon notes, “his fame spread throughout every country, until it reached the king of the Persians and the lord of Egypt, and it passed the Great Sea until it reached the Pope in Rome and [also] Constantinople.”³⁸¹ Eventually, Naghash caught the eye of great barons who lived nearby, such as Oṣman Beg, the Āq Qoyunlū governor of the entire region from Khaṛan to Trabzon, who gave Naghash jurisdiction over all Christians in the area and dressed him in fine clothes befitting a king. Even more importantly, Oṣman Beg lavished Naghash with gifts of money and permission to preach openly from the bible. Oṣman Beg's successor, Hamza, continued to pursue the same policies, which were not entirely altruistic. Edward Khondkaryan, the editor of the critical edition of Naghash's poetry, has suggested that Oṣman Beg and Hamza gave Naghash nearly autonomous control over the Christian population in order to stabilize a region that was under repeated attack from the Qarā Qoyunlū, another Turkic tribal federation, to the east. In 1451, for example, one such battle came to Diyarbakır, and Astuatsatur reports that Naghash's son, a priest by the name of Mesrob, was killed in the fighting.³⁸²

³⁸¹ Ibid., 203.

³⁸² Ibid., 31.

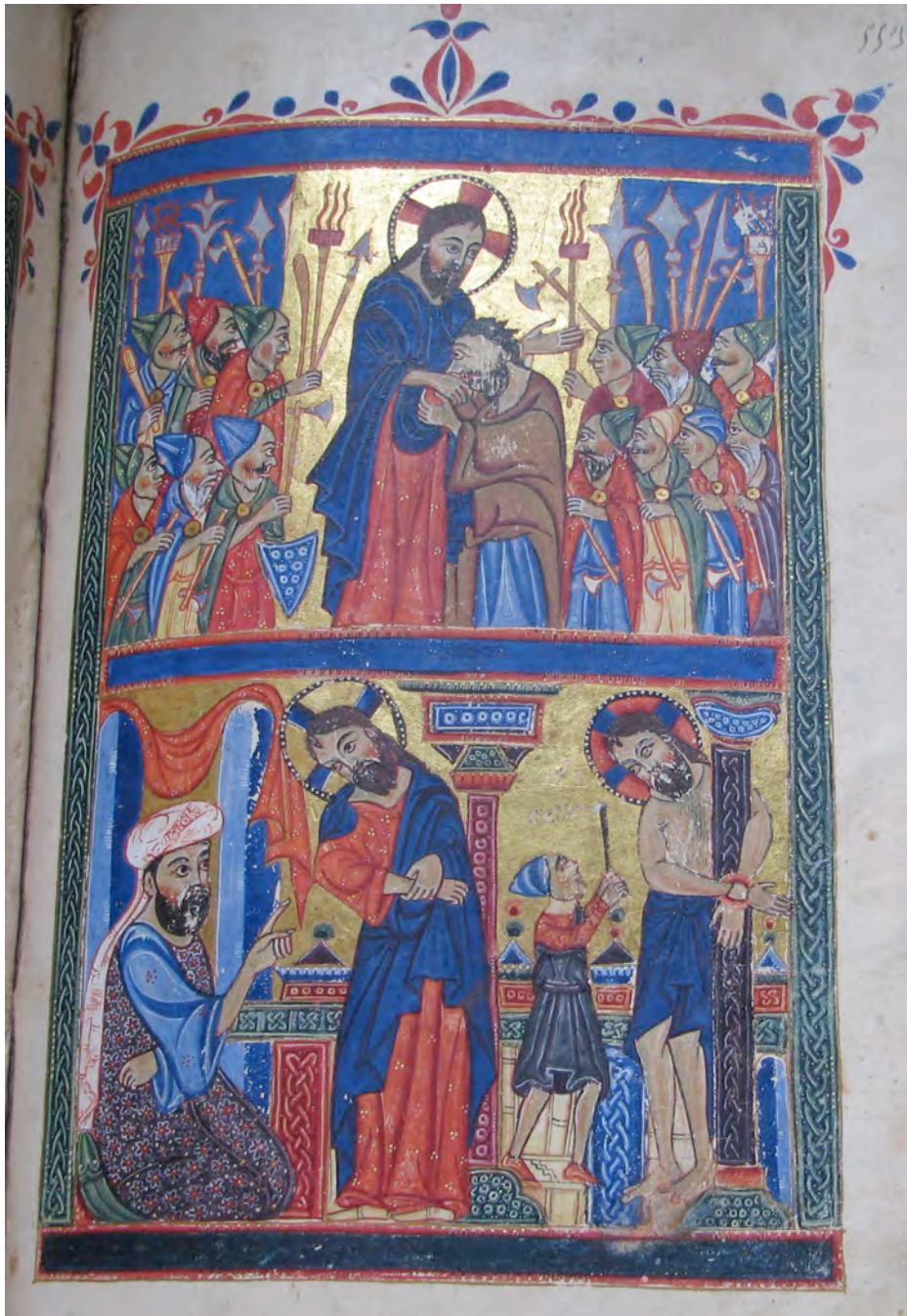


Fig. 8: New Testament illuminated by Mkrtych' Naghash. In the lower left-hand corner, Christ meets with the 'Roman' governor Pontius Pilate. Photo taken by John Hodian at the Mekhitarist Library at San Lazzaro.

If Khondkaryan's hypothesis is correct, then Naghash served an analogous function as did the heads of Şūfī communities elsewhere in Rūm, as the local sovereign was able to award Naghash certain honors and power, and then leverage that power in order to maintain greater stability over diverse populations in the region. Certainly, the author of the colophon goes out of his way to reinforce that Naghash had both religious and political authority even among Kurds, Arabs, Persians, Turks, and Jews in the region. Whether some of this is an exaggeration or not, it is clear that Naghash addressed a variety of different communities in his everyday dealings, and he further did so as a spiritually and politically authoritative figure.

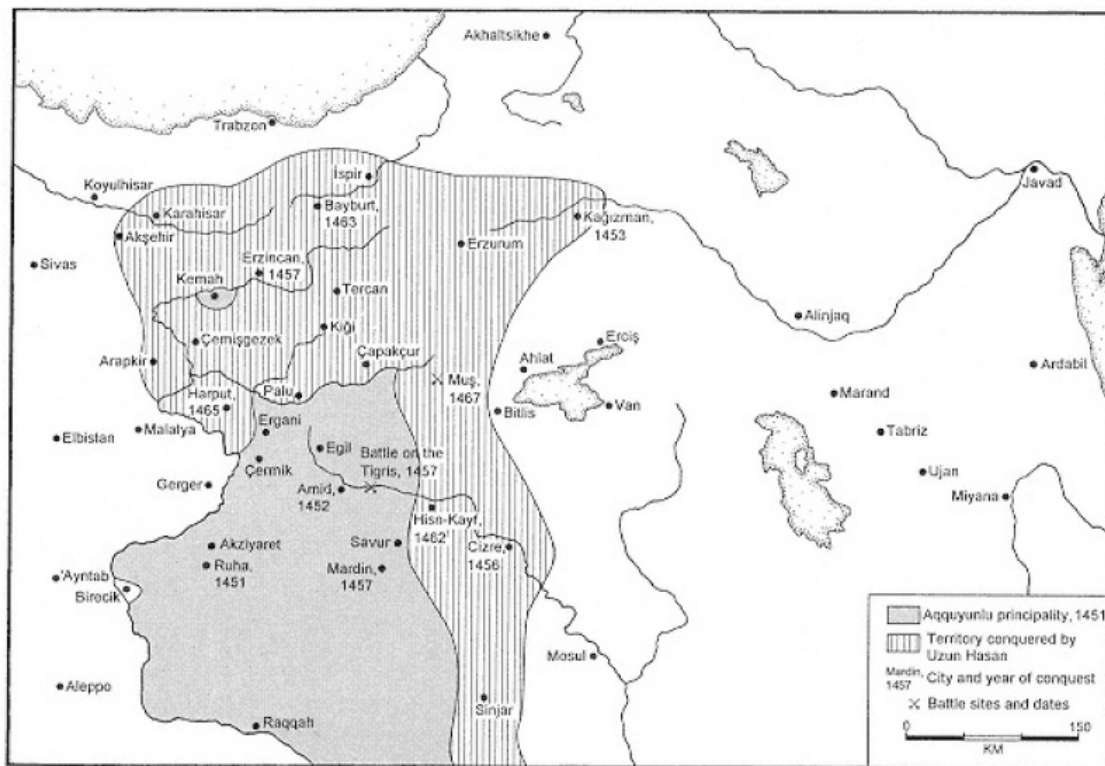


Fig. 9: Āq Qoyunlū principality, 1451³⁸³

³⁸³ John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu Clan, Confederation, Empire: A Study in 15th/9th Century Turko-Iranian Politics* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1976), 94.

Nor, it seems, did Naghash retreat from the political sphere to tend to his flock. Astuatsatur records that Naghash frequently bribed local officials to aid him in some matter. Even more surprisingly, the bishop kept a makeshift band of soldiers close at hand to rescue Armenians on the road who had been kidnapped during a raid or battle. Above all, he aimed to safeguard the religious and social integrity of his flock, even while establishing good relations with local sovereigns and in his dealings with a multi-religious, multilingual community.

However, Naghash's greatest undertaking was the construction of the Holy Mother of God Church, in which he invested all of his time, resources, and even self, personally designing several images on the walls. Astuatsatur reports that the church stood taller than even the minarets of nearby mosques, and for this reason, the ensuing public outcry compelled Hamza to order the destruction of the church in 1443. Heartbroken, Naghash departed from his home in Diyarbakır and spent years in voluntary exile, traveling to the Black Sea, Constantinople, Theodosia, and Crimea.³⁸⁴ During the years he spent away from his homeland, he was able to meet and interact with other Armenians who had been driven to emigrate in order to find work and support their families. Although Naghash was not as prolific an author of poetry as Frik, two of the poems he wrote chronicle the plight of the Armenian abroad. Most importantly, the word he chose to call these Armenians, more than emigre [*pantukhd*], foreigner [*ōtar*], or exile [*ak'sōr*], all Armenian words, was *gharib*.

Still, we ought to remember that even before Naghash's sojourn abroad, Khlats'i told us that Amida was among the regions which were ravished by different invading armies. Arguably, Naghash already had experience with many regional

Armenian, Persian, and Turkish gharibs even *before* he traveled abroad, although seeing his flock scattered throughout Rūm likely reinforced his desire to address this problem directly. He did so in two separate poems, each of which arguably serve different purposes. The first of these is the most similar to Aṛakʿelʿs tagh and Farmanʿs ban, so we will begin here:

Naghashi Asatsʿeal ē Vasn Gharibatsʿn [*Composed (lit. Spoken) by Naghash on Gharibs*]

Glory to God forever, the lover of mankind,
Who has created the various creatures.
Man is king and unequalled across
The east, north, south, and west.

But the gharibʿs life is mournful, lamentable,
Bitter and acrid, full of sadness in a stringent dungeon.
When he becomes a wanderer in a foreign land [*ōtar erkir tʿapʿarakan*],
Strangers [*ōtar*] do not recognize the gharib, they do not know him.

There he knows neither brother, nor loved one, nor relative
Nor an important, hospitable person [*aspnjakan*].
Whether he be the son of a baron and unequalled,
They call him a scoundrel, a vagabond.

The gharibʿs bread is bitter, which he eats,
The water he drinks is bitter and acrid, mixed with tears,
Should they give him almonds and sugar, that he might eat,
When he sighs, blood drops from his heart.

The gharibʿs heart is in mourning, uncomforted,
When he sighs, his heart sinks to his stomach [*sirdn i pʿorn arnu galar*].
When he remembers his loved ones equally,
Blood flows down his face from his eyes.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 81.

The gharib's intellect is lost, his mind wanders,
And if he be more dextrous in mind than Solomon,
That he speaks some things [*ban*] [like] priceless gems,
They rebuke him, saying: Shut up, idiot, fool!

The gharib's day [is] miserable, his night is terrible,
Sleep escapes his eyes and there is no means,
He is tortured mentally, the entire night, with no relief:
"Tomorrow what will befall my captive self, when dawn breaks."

The gharib's grief comes, when he grows hungry,
Hiding his face in the streets, he begs,
Many close their door in his face, he sits and weeps,
For should the captive want a drop of water, no one gives it [to him].

The gharib's poverty is extremely difficult,
Vexed before all without any recourse.
The gharib is a stranger [*ōtar*] and migrant [*pandukht*] in a foreign land [*erkir*
ōtar],
Though the captive begs for [a little], no one gives it to him.

The gharib goes home, enters it in fear
Of the landlord, extremely afraid [as though] of a dog.
When they see [him], they drive him out, scorning him.
And he turns his back, sadly weeping.

Many have a table set with a thousand good [things],
And the gharib comes and enters, ashamed,
They say a thousand wicked things insulting him,
Then they give a piece of bread, grumbling.

The gharib is wretched, when suddenly he falls ill,
He remains fallen on foreign streets, ash-covered,
Although he had many loved ones, not one remains,
And he stays fallen on his face, bitterly he weeps.

The gharib weeps and sighs, "what will befall me?
Alas, do my loved ones know, what state I'm in [*inch' hali kam*].

I am a gharib, a stranger [*ōtar*], and an emigre [*pandukht*], I weep bitterly,
I have no one to be a loved one or friend to me.”

The gharib, fallen, wallows pitiably,
For he arrived at the violent moment of the day of death--
There was no pillow beneath the head of the gharib, no bed,
The stone paving was his bolster, the sand his bed.

He goes forth and quits his final moment of life,
His strength departs and seeps out, his soul is destroyed.
He looks pitiably right and sadly left,
There is no one, who could give a drop of water to the gharib.

At the hour of death, the gharib called for a priest,
No one was there, that they perform a supplication for him.
No loved one, no friend was near him,
From his wound he bitterly weeps and sighs.

The gharib’s Lord is God, He listens to him,
Compassion dawns in the heart of the priest,
And he comes as God ordered him,
The gharib takes heart from communion.

The gharib, arriving at the day of death,
Bitterly laments and gives up the ghost in tears,
And lays fallen in the street, abandoned,
No one came to see the gharib, no helper.

See, how bitter is the death and the life of the gharib.
No one was there, to cross his hands over his heart,
Mocking, they take him to the grave,
No one came to the burial of the gharib.

Naghash said, that the life of the gharib is ruined [*haram*],
I know the gharib’s state [*hal*], so I lament.
Although I say the kindness [*lut’f*] and mercy [*k’aram*],
When I remember being a gharib [*ghariput’iwn*], I tremble more than the willow
tree.

Naghash said, that: The gharib's heart is tender,
The sweet appears bitter to him and the rose as a thorn.
Converse with the gharib, sweet things of care,
Give [him] compassion and atone for the thorn of sin.

The most blessed virgin Mary, Mother of God,
You refuge, be the helper of the gharib.
May every gharib reach his dream with goodness,
And we all prostrate ourselves before you, Mother of God.³⁸⁵

As in the previous songs on gharibs in Armenian, we can observe the same topoi and structure here, although perhaps in more detail: the gharib is distant from loved ones; even sugar is bitter to him; should the gharib be as eloquent as Solomon, strangers ultimately silence and ridicule him; his former position in the world makes no difference in his current treatment; and the gharib dies and is buried anonymously. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, these topoi are extremely general, and might be said to constitute a 'common' way of using the figure of the gharib to posit dissimilar ideas throughout Rūm.

However, Naghash also weaves into these topoi a new story which we do not even find in Aṛak'el's work. First, the 'Christian' element of this poem is not superficially added onto the end, but rather it is pervasive throughout. The poem begins with praise to God, noting that while man is the greatest of all the creatures, the gharib is the saddest of all men. As in the other Armenian works about strangers, the gharib here has no companion, no helper, and no friend. However, the social world of this gharib also includes the figure of the priest, who initially neglects to help or even notice the gharib at all. It is not until God listens to the gharib, and *then commands the priest to deliver*

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 168-76.

communion to the stranger, does the gharib receive any relief. The implication here is striking: God still cares for gharibs, although fellow Christians, even priests of the church, might fall short in performing their duty. Whereas Aṛak‘el’s song aimed to instruct ‘gharibs’ to do good works in this world if they want to enter the kingdom of heaven, Naghash’s poem is arguably directed towards both ‘gharibs’ and the community at large *in different ways*. The gharib is reminded that Mother of God, Mary, watches over him or her, but others are commanded to “give [the gharib] compassion and atone for the thorn of sin.”

Hence, Naghash’s poem functions on three different levels: as a popular form of entertainment,³⁸⁶ it shared structural and thematic similarities with other songs in Rūm, and was therefore highly accessible to different kinds of audiences, such as the heterogeneous community in which Naghash lived. Second, the song commands fellow Christians and clergy to aid the gharib in order to atone for any wrongdoing. This was not only a moral issue, but as we have seen in the case of Khlat‘ets‘i’s concern over potential conversions away from Christianity, may have been a social and confessional issue as well: if the church and lay Armenians could not incorporate “gharibs” into their social and spiritual lives, displaced populations were at risk of leaving the fold. Finally, the song directly comforts gharibs themselves, reminding those gharibs not to leave the fold, for God shall deliver them. In short, the first function concerns a highly accessible mode of communication which was already understood, even by non-Christian audiences, beyond major academic centers of learning. The second two functions address a

³⁸⁶ As I will discuss in my conclusion, there is strong manuscript evidence to believe that Naghash’s song was widely popular across Anatolia and even southern Europe.

problem—how to better comfort and keep displaced populations within the fabric of the Church.

These functions are just as apparent in Naghash’s second poem on gharibs, which features a soliloquy between the gharib and his/her own soul:³⁸⁷

A Tagh, Composed, Concerning Gharibs [*Tagh vasn gharibi asats’ eal*]

—Soul [*hogi*], don’t say ‘gharib,’ or else my heart will break.
[To be] a gharib in a foreign land [*i yōtar erkir*], truly is extremely hard.
Just like a bird separated from the flock, wandering, does not rest anywhere,
He stays [in a state of] flux, until he reaches his place.

—Gharib, do not be vexed, these difficult days pass away,
Every gharib returned home, do not think that it [will] not be for you.
They say that God the compassionate will take pity on every gharib,
He will also be a helper to you, so that you reach the desire of your heart [*srtid murati*].

Soul, truly speak right, my heart is blacker than coal,
From the wound of being a gharib [*ghariput’ ean dardēn*] the color of my face is drained,
Whenever I bring to mind my brothers and my loved ones,
My soul leaps to my mouth, but has no way of breaking free.

—Gharib, do not trouble [*ghusay*] yourself, no gain is made from such troubling.
Many youths trouble [*ghusay*] themselves, in the place of gain, they waste away.
[Such] troubling [*ghusay*] brings many pain, from pain man dies,
Whatever heart has longing [*hasrat’*] is deprived [*mahrūm*] of all else.

—Alas, I say, for the gharib who is in a foreign [*yōtar*] land,
His eyes are full of tears which fall down his face.
When he sits in the *majlis*, undoubtedly his heart bleeds,
He looks everywhere about him, he has nothing and no one.

³⁸⁷ The term ‘hogi,’ or ‘soul,’ sometimes is also used as a term of endearment, analogous to the Persian “jān.” It may be that the gharib is speaking to someone near and dear in this song.

—We are all gharibs, brothers, no one truly has a homeland [*hayreni*],
We are all going equally, for that life is our homeland.
Obtain a means for yourself here, that your soul doesn't suffer there,
Make the saints your brothers and the angels your loved ones.³⁸⁸

As in the other songs, here too do we have a list of grievances against the gharib, but this time, the gharib voices these grievances directly him or herself; no mediating and omnipresent narrator is necessary. The soul then counsels not to be vexed, for God will redeem the gharib, and overly troubling oneself only brings death. For every complaint the gharib articulates, the 'soul' responds with this similarly comforting message.

Yet is this gharib really so alone? '*Hogi*,' or soul, can have a double meaning as a term of endearment, much like the Persian '*jān*.' Furthermore, in the gharib's final speaking role, the gharib calls attention to the only setting mentioned here: the majlis, a sitting area where those gathered could engage in convivial conversation, and perhaps even perform music and recite poetry. Whereas the gharib is tempted to shut him or herself off from the world, to close their eyes and retreat into their own bleeding heart, the '*hogi*' reminds the gharib that "no one truly has a homeland," for the simple reason that the afterlife is our true destination. In other words, the '*hogi*' reminds the gharib that he or she is still a member of a larger social body, even though that body may be scattered throughout the world. This thought reaches its apex in the line, "we are all gharibs, brothers."

Hence, the work not only calls attention in the title to its own genre as a *tagh*, or song, but it also perhaps evokes a setting where gharibs could theoretically gather and console themselves communally *with this same tagh*. As in the previous tagh, which

sought to instruct others to include gharibs into society, this song likewise seeks to instill a sense of community within those displaced populations who might identify as ‘gharibs.’ Again, that sense of community is rooted along confessional lines, as the gharib doesn’t belong to any larger group of displaced people, but to a group of people who are “brothers,” united in their faith in God.

Interestingly, here Naghash comes closest to articulating a basic understanding of the gharib as shared by Rūmī and Yunūs Emre. Rūmī, we remember, preached that “the true gharib” is one who has already quit this world and its riches, and consequently belongs to God. Likewise, Yunūs Emre’s conception of the gharib was not based on a geographic displacement, but rather in terms of one’s subjective, spiritual orientation, as this world is not the gharib’s home. Nor was this understanding of the gharib limited to ‘Şūfī’ communities, but it extended to Jewish thought as well. For instance, the philosopher Judah Ben Nissim Ibn Malkah wrote his famous *Uns-al-Gharib* [*Consolation of the Stranger*], likely in Spain or Africa, in the middle 14th century. Not only is this work also structured as a *dialog between the self and the soul*, but it furthermore underscores the point that we are all exiled in this world, and consequently only in the next life will we find our true home. We could conceivably find this Armenian tagh, which neither makes explicit reference to Christianity nor contains Naghash’s name, fitting comfortably within any number of religious traditions which had likewise incorporated the gharib into works of their own.

This was hardly coincidental. Just as the early authors of literary Turkish in Rūm sought to incorporate Persianate ‘styles’ and literary figures into their own work, Naghash wanted to draw from other intersecting literary cultures rather than attempt

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 165-7.

merely to supplant them. Those cultures, arguably, were shaped by more than what we might conceive as ‘orthodox’ Armenian Christians alone, but rather developed in a multilingual geographic space where different peoples possessed both a shared lived experience and, occasionally, a shared exilic experience. Arguably, the thematic, lexical, and structural similarities between the works of Aṙak‘el Baghishets‘i, Mkrtych‘ Naghash, popular romances, and other poetic and musical works about gharibs in different languages speaks to the fact that there was already a widespread culture in the lands of Rūm which conceived of the gharib in particular ways: a broader mentalité about the virtue of *integrating the gharib into one’s own community*, and in the Armenian case, of strengthening one’s own community thereby. What better way than to foster a message of unity within the Armenian church than by tapping into this culture and bringing it into a new confessional orbit, especially at a moment when dispersion and conversion threatened to dissolve the social and religious fabric of the region?

Again, we should not be concerned whether Naghash was ‘derivative’ or ‘original’ of other works regarding the gharib—certainly, in language and intention, he was different, but those other categories do not really apply here. Rather, we ought to investigate how authors like Mkrtych‘ Naghash attempted to speak to their contemporary audiences in an effective manner, and through this act of negotiating the meaning of literary figures and forms which cut across disparate peoples and languages, alter the confessional fabric of these communities. Naghash’s message that scattered Christians are unified in Christ is remarkably similar to Nersēs Shnorhali’s own understanding of the dispersed Armenian people, united in the body of the church. The *manner* of

communicating this message, however, is altogether different, and furthermore did not require a mediating priest to explain the *tagh* to the general populace.

That manner, that communicative strategy, required a mode of communication from the *outside* to enter into the traditional literary paradigms of the Armenian church, as did the word ‘gharib’ itself. Naghash, who traveled extensively, witnessed displaced populations coming and going from Amida and its neighboring environs, and furthermore had extensive dealings with his multilingual, multi-religious community, found the ‘gharib’ an effective way to address Nersēs Shnorhali’s twin problem of communicating in a comprehensible manner to far-flung audiences. Consequently, he adopted a broadly accessible literary language, and with it, a figure of displacement which had developed across (and beyond) the lands of Rūm. Finally, as we have seen, Naghash was not alone in employing the gharib to foster social and confessional cohesion. The messages of Armenian, Persian, and Turkish authors were certainly different, but the competitive manner in which the gharib was articulated, as well as the underlying goal of fostering particular socio-religious communities, falls under a similar rubric for communicating *dissimilar* ideas through a broadly accessible conceptual language, and with it, a concomitant set of literary conventions which cut across languages and religions.

Epilogue: Unity in Dispersion

We began this chapter with a twin problem facing the Armenian church: how to serve the needs of the faithful, who were now scattered until “the ends of the earth,” and how to

communicate to these distant, disparate communities in effective, resonant ways. While there was no single solution to this problem, I have argued that the adoption of Middle Armenian as a poetic and literary language by figures in the Armenian church partly addressed this challenge. Of course, the development of Middle Armenian encompassed not only the use of an accessible literary language, but also a manner of communicating on grounds that were already familiar and comprehensible to different target audiences. As clergymen began to articulate this common language within the theological and confessional framework of the Armenian church, they also had to actively reinterpret popular literary figures and forms which intersected with multiple oral cultures, neighboring literary traditions, and even other religions. Finally, I have suggested that the stakes of doing this implicated, to a certain extent, the ability of the church to maintain confessional boundaries between Armenian Christians and neighboring peoples.

In the case of the *gharib*, I have further suggested that because this figure was so widespread, both in an ‘extra-religious’ context in Armenian popular romances, as well as in an explicitly ‘Islamic’ context in the other cities, it proved to be an attractive vehicle for conveying new messages about the dispersion of Armenians, as the *gharib* was already highly recognizable and familiar to a variety of peoples and communities across Rūm. Voiced through clergymen like Aṙak‘el Baghishets‘i and Mkrtych‘ Naghash, the *gharib* became a potent symbol for urging Christians to keep the faith abroad, as well as to incorporate emigres and refugees more tightly into one’s own community, and hence help to prevent the further breakdown of confessional boundaries. In particular, while the message that Mkrtych‘ Naghash conveyed through the *gharib* does not necessarily differ

in intention from the *General Epistle*, Naghash composed *taghs* in a colloquial style which would not necessarily need priests to interpret to lay audiences.

Furthermore, partly because Naghash's message was easily comprehensible, his conception of the gharib spread rapidly. In fact, Hakop Meghapart, the first Armenian printer, published one of Naghash's *taghs* on gharibs in the first ever Armenian songbook in 1513. It was printed in Venice, some 1,525 miles from Amida, *only 38 years after Naghash's death*. Arguably, Mkrtych' Naghash and his contemporaries succeeded in fostering a particular conception of the gharib that was relevant not only in eastern Rūm, but even in Europe and across the Near East, as we know his songs were copied in Venice, Kafa, Constantinople, Sepastia, Tokat, Vostan, Julfa, Ardabil, and many other places by the 17th century.

Scribes copied Naghash's *taghs* about gharibs especially in songbooks and in Mashtots', or books which describe the rituals and practices of the Armenian church. Especially in the case of the latter, it seems that priests continued to play an active role in reciting these *taghs* about gharibs in subsequent centuries, helping to spread Naghash's message that Christians are all gharibs in this world, and hence are united even in dispersion. It may be that priests continued to use these *taghs* to shape the ways their audiences understood their own dispersion, and we certainly know that other works by Naghash were used for similar purposes. For instance, in one Mashtots' written in 1615 in Vostan, the scribe notes that during the burial of youth, the priest can choose to recite a different poem written by Naghash about the untimely death of young people: "And recite this lamentation by Bishop Naghash. If you are willing, recite it. And if not, turn

the [page] and read the sermon.”³⁸⁹ Likewise, we know of at least ten Mashtots’ which were copied with Naghash’s first *tagh* on gharibs during the 17th century alone, a time when the Armenians faced widespread dispersion on unprecedented levels, as Shah ‘Abbas had deported several hundred thousand Armenians into the Safavid Empire in 1604.

In some cases, it seems that these *taghs* also provided a representational model at least for clergymen to think about the state of their own people. For example, the monk in Vostan who copied our 1615 Mashtots’ contextualized the hardships of his own historical moment in part through the figure of the gharib. The monk notes that he copied the Mashtots’ “in bitter and stringent times, for other peoples [*azgik’n*] have grown powerful over Christians through the leverage of taxes. And the red-hatted ones [Qezelbāsh] have kept the land trembling in fear and terror...”³⁹⁰ Immediately following this colophon is one of Naghash’s *taghs* on gharibs, lamenting over the lone, wandering gharib, who has no helper.

Naghash’s *taghs* were also preserved in a diverse collection of songbooks [*tagharan*] which could have been recited in both monastic and lay settings alike. In addition, the ways these *taghs* on gharibs were paired with other texts is telling about how audiences thought about the intersections between dispersion, history, and their own contemporary moment. In one *tagharan* from 1594 which begins with several works which depict significant events in the Old and New Testament, we later find an apocalyptic poem of the vision of Nersēs the Great warning about the coming of Moḥammad, various invading armies, and “the end of time.” The poem is followed thirty

³⁸⁹ See Matenadaran MS. 5069, 91v.

³⁹⁰ See Matenadaran MS. 5069, 270v.

folios later by Naghash's *tagh*, "Soul, don't say gharib,"³⁹¹ followed by another song on gharibs, selections from the *Book of Adam*, a poem on being separated from loved ones, Aṛak'el Baghishets'i's lament over the fall of Constantinople, and other *taghs* written "in the language of the people [*azg lezwaw*]." Clearly, the 'gharib' was not the only manner in which people thought about their own historical circumstances, but it arguably was part and parcel of the larger ways these songbooks encouraged reflection on recent events, both past and present, communal and personal, within the larger framework of Christian History.

The oldest manuscript copy of the *History of the Youth Farman*, dated to the 15th century, similarly builds a larger interpretive framework through its pairings of different works on gharibs, as well as suggests at how those frameworks were tied to the social realities of the day. Shortly after the romance of the *History* ends, a scribe included an additional poem about Lazarus and the Rich Man, where Lazarus is described as an emigre [*pantukhd*] who reaches heaven, while the rich man descends to burn in hell. Perhaps not surprisingly, the scribe felt compelled to mention at the end of the manuscript that his patron, a Baron Khtërshah, was a "lover of the church and the poor [*aghk'atats'*]; a caretaker of orphans and widows."³⁹² Just as the travelers who encountered Farman in the romance desired to be hospitable towards gharibs, here we have the scribe hastening to assure us that his patron was also 'gharib-dōst,' we might say.

On the tattered back folio of this same manuscript, another scribe subsequently added an incomplete song by Naghash, traditionally titled "Lament over the sleeping,

³⁹¹ Matenadaran MS. 1661, 103v.

³⁹² Matenadaran MS. 3595, 105v.

who have died in a foreign land [*awtarut' iwn*],” but here is labeled: “Concerning Gharibs, Which Is Recited.” The *tagh* additionally has rising and falling accentual notes over the letters, again drawing our attention to the oral and performative dimension of many of these works, as well as to the fact that the ‘gharib’ came to life in ways that extend beyond the material records we have today. While the final two stanzas of this lament are missing, including the penultimate line where the Virgin Mary is asked to let “every gharib safely reach his home,” these intra-manuscript pairings also suggest that the *History of the Youth Farman* was perhaps already being incorporated into a Christian hermeneutic framework by the time it was copied in the 15th century.³⁹³ As I have attempted to show throughout this chapter, it was obviously not the gharib *itself* which needed to be incorporated within a Christian interpretive framework, but rather the greater communities which composed songs and poems in Middle Armenian.

Finally, we ought to conclude by returning to Nersēs Shnorhali here, as he helped to shape the narrative that Armenians represented one body, united in the church, despite being scattered among “foreign-speaking peoples.” As I have argued, this narrative which began in Classical Armenian continued to live on in the Armenian ‘vernaculars’ of subsequent centuries. Whereas Nersēs lamented that he could not travel the earth to preach his message, the gharib can and did travel to the edges of the Armenian world, comforting the flock, and reminding the faithful that they were part of a greater community, even if that community was notably distant. It is fitting, then, that at the end of one *General Epistle*, copied in Karin in 1597, we actually find Naghash’s famous *tagh*

³⁹³ Certainly, we have some historical precedence for this, as the 13th century scribe Khach’atur Kech’aruets’i attempted to make “a straight path” when copying the popular Alexander Romance, primarily by suggesting that Alexander was a prototype of Christ. See Pseudo Callisthenes, *The Romance*

on gharibs, contextualizing and reflecting Nersēs' message back through a mirror that was both familiar and alien at the same time.³⁹⁴ Ultimately, this message was comprehensible, popular, and highly circulatory. It was borne on a literary language beyond the paradigm of Classical Armenian, traveling across linguistically and religiously heterogeneous societies, and like the multifaceted peoples who gave the gharib voice, populated distant lands in restless search of home.

of Alexander the Great, trans. Albert Mugrdich Wolohojian (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 14.

³⁹⁴ Matenadaran MS. 3050, 267v.



Fig. 10: Tagh by Mkrtych' Naghach in the first printed Armenian songbook, Venice, 1513.

Chapter Four

The Stranger's Voice: Mapping Integrated Literatures in the Lands of Rūm

To the winds, the waters hoarcely call,
And Eccho back againe revoyced all.³⁹⁵

-Giles Fletcher (d. 1623), *Christs Victorie*

Telle us som murie thyng of aventures.
Youre termes, youre colours, and youre figures,
Keepe hem in stoor til so be that ye endite
Heigh style, as whan that men to kynges write.
Speketh so pleyn at this time, we yow preye,
That we may understonde what ye seye. (Lines 15-20)³⁹⁶

-Geoffrey Chaucer (d. 1400), *The Clerk's Tale*

³⁹⁵ Giles Fletcher, *Christs Victorie, and Triumph in Heauen, and Earth, Ouer, and after Death* (Cambridge: C. Legge, 1610), 45.

³⁹⁶ Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Clerk's Tale," in *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 101-14.

1. Introduction

Much ink has been spilled over the aforementioned passage, quoted from the clerk's tale in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in which the band of pilgrims requests an adventure story in the courtly "heigh style" from the clerk, but not just in any manner. Rather, this band of sojourning pilgrims wanted the clerk to translate such lofty "termes" and "figures" into "pleyn" speech, so as to be locally comprehensible.

Immediately, the tale strikes a chord with many accounts of literary appropriation which we have previously investigated. First, Rūmī's disciples requested a new *maṣnavī* to be composed in the "vazn o tarz" [meter and manner] of 'Aṭṭār and Sanā'ī in order to render those authors accessible to local audiences.³⁹⁷ This was not only an act of retelling, but ultimately was an act of reinterpreting previous works, including the ḥadīth and Qur'ān, while simultaneously co-opting their authority. Similarly, Solṭān Valad's audience later requested that he compose a book in the vazn of Rūmī's own *Maṣnavī* which could plainly address new Persian, Turkish, and Greek communities in the lands of Rūm.³⁹⁸ Turkish authors such as 'Āṣiḳ Paşa assumed this literary labor of appropriation as well, as they composed lengthy Turkish *maṣnavīs* in an analogous meter and style in order to foster new confessional communities of Turkish speakers who were converting to Islam. Finally, the Armenian poet Kostandin Erznkats'i composed in the "dzayn" [manner or, literally, 'sound' and 'voice'] of the *Shāh-nāma* in order to deliver resonant

³⁹⁷ Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-'ārefīn*, ed. T. Yazıcı (Ankara, 1959), 740.

³⁹⁸ Solṭān Valad, *Rabāb-nāma*, ed. 'Alī Solṭānī Gerdfarāmarzī (Tehran: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, Tehran Branch, 1980), 1.

lessons on Christian cosmography in a popular form.³⁹⁹ Nor was Kostandin alone: rather, I have argued that a larger process of ‘voicing’ popular literary forms and figures within a Christian interpretive framework was ongoing in the region, drawing both from oral cultures in Armenian as well as from neighboring literary and religious cultures.

Building upon these previous case studies, I will argue here that in examining this ongoing and negotiated culture of appropriating the literary and musical works of others in Rūm, we can begin to identify how literary figures such as the *gharīb*, or stranger, not only were constituent elements of greater communicative strategies within this shared geographic space, but in many ways both performed and enacted those strategies in locally comprehensible ways. These strategies aimed both to foster new confessional boundaries by appropriating and reinterpreting literary figures and forms from ‘elsewhere,’ broadly conceived, as well as to speak in terms that were easily comprehensible, and to a certain extent already familiar to heterogeneous, potentially overlapping audiences. Chaucer’s famous tale of the clerk importantly indicates that, of course, this practice of appropriating and reinterpreting literatures in other languages was not limited to Rūm alone, but was extremely prevalent during this period of nascent literary languages, whether those languages be English or Italian, Middle Armenian or Oghuz Turkish.

Yet, the clerk’s tale also matters to the present study for another reason, as it foregrounds perhaps the most important question of this dissertation: what does it mean to reach towards “local” comprehension in one language by using “terms” and “figures” appropriated from another linguistic, literary, and cultural sphere? In other words, how

³⁹⁹ Kostandin Erznkats’i, *Tagher*, ed. Armenuhi Srapyan (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR GA Hratarakch’ut’yun, 1962), 209.

does one use the “foreign” to reconsider what encompasses the “native,” especially in the realm of literary languages themselves? This question is theoretical in nature, but the ways in which different authors addressed it—often *through* figurative language appropriated from elsewhere—were highly pragmatic, and frequently implicated the formation of new literary and religious communities. To this end, case studies such as Chaucer’s tale afford us an opportunity to understand how performative *figures*, appropriated from other literary languages, can help us conceptualize the theoretical and pragmatic dimensions of how different authors attempted to shape their interpretive communities through various acts of literary appropriation.

Finally, this chapter argues that such cultures of literary appropriation in Rūm ought to be differentiated from contemporary processes which were ongoing in Europe and South Asia. Instead of charting literary appropriation exclusively between “superposed” or dominant cultural formations and their nascent “vernacular” counterparts, I will rather look at how acts of appropriation in Rūm encourage us to consider a more dynamic, multidirectional way of thinking about the interconnectedness of these different literary languages within a shared geographic space, which may have import for scholars attempting to chart literary appropriation across other literary languages in new contexts, even within the modern period. To that end, I will define these interrelated cultures of appropriation across literary languages as constituted by a *practice of revoicing*, which encompasses an attempt to communicate in an easily accessible manner, an attempt to introduce knowledge from ‘elsewhere’ through the appropriation and reinterpretation of other literary figures and forms, and an attempt to shape particular interpretative communities around specific social or spiritual

orientations.⁴⁰⁰ In the particular case of Rūm, the figure of the gharīb, which performatively represents and enacts the entrance of something ‘foreign’ into our midst, is an exemplary figure of this practice.

2. Intersecting Literary Languages: A Remapping of Rūm

Literary “termes” and “figures,” particularly those which bridge multiple literary languages, can offer contemporary scholars a glimpse into how premodern authors conceptualized their own literary projects. However, if the phenomenon of appropriating from other literary languages draws the critical attention of contemporary scholarship, it is only because it first drew the attention of premodern authors, who, through various acts of literary appropriation, negotiated their own authority and attempted to shape their interpretive communities in different ways.

This section examines how some of the major frameworks for conceptualizing the relationships between premodern literary languages utilize the “termes” and “figures” of premodern authors in order to understand different acts of appropriation across literary languages. While the age of globalization has offered new vistas for scholars to map the

⁴⁰⁰ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, ‘revoicing’ is both a transitive and intransitive verb, a noun, and an adjective. Most simply stated, as a verb, to revoice is “To voice (a thing or person) again or in a different way; to re-express.” It also can connote a musical and auditory dimension: “To readjust the tone of (an organ pipe, a set of pipes, etc.); (occas. more generally) to repair or modify (a musical instrument) so it may make a different or renewed sound.” As a noun, it refers to the act or action of revoicing. Finally, in the rare adjectival sense, revoicing is that which “voices something again or repeatedly.” See “revoice, v.”. OED Online. December 2013. Oxford University Press. 30 January 2014 <<http://www.oed.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/view/Entry/164942>>., “revoicing, n.”. OED Online. December 2013. Oxford University Press. 30 January 2014 <<http://www.oed.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/view/Entry/275702>>., and “revoicing, adj.”. OED Online.

simultaneous development of modern literatures across the planet, in the premodern period, those mappings look somewhat different, embedded in methodologies which often focus either on translation or, more recently, ‘vernacularization.’ In this section, I look at these two very different scales of literary appropriation. Whereas one scale focuses on the appropriation of a single literary figure across several languages, the other scale accounts for how local tongues are configured *into* literary languages by appropriating what Sheldon Pollock calls a “cosmopolitan literary code” (that is, the general literary conventions, forms, and figures) wholesale from a classical language like Latin or Sanskrit.

While both of these scales of literary appropriation are quite different, one common thread that unites these frameworks is that each are grounded in an understanding between a singular “classical” or cosmopolitan language and a variety of emerging “vernacular” languages. In Rūm during the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, that thread becomes increasingly tangled and knotted, as there existed a variety of literary languages which arguably were ‘cosmopolitan’ in different degrees, intersecting with more nascent literary languages like Oghuz Turkish or Middle Armenian. Therefore, I present these frameworks here not because I think we should apply them to Rūm, but rather because they help to foreground why an alternative conceptual mapping of the literary landscape of Rūm is needed before we can address these different scales of literary appropriation across languages, exemplified by the ever-migrating figure of the *gharīb*. In the next section, I will look at how premodern authors themselves present us with one possible mapping of these different literary languages

within a shared space through their own appropriations of the gharīb. This conceptual remapping is not based on models of “classical” and “vernacular” languages, but rather involves a more lateral understanding of how ‘meaning’ is negotiated across languages.

However, the objectives of this section are more modest. First, I seek to outline these different scales of literary appropriation largely through frameworks developed for studying European and South Asian literatures, whose corresponding regions likewise saw the development of new literary languages during this period of time. Second, I present the case that the literary landscape in Rūm does not entirely fit models of “classical” and “vernacular” languages in quite the same way as it does in Europe or South Asia during this period in time. Finally, I present the figure of the gharīb as an alternative way of mapping what is “native” and “non-native” to a particular literary language than these models encourage us to think about. Rather than focusing on what is indigenous and natural within a particular set of literary conventions, I will posit that the gharīb can help us texture the literary landscape of Rūm as fundamentally heterogeneous and exogenous; constituting what is foreign at the core, and not periphery, of literary production itself.

To understand how premodern authors conceptualized their own literary languages through the appropriation of literary figures from *other* literary languages, we ought to return to Chaucer’s tale of the clerk, which represents a linear mode of appropriation between discrete authors and works. As Chaucer’s clerk notes, he took this “pleyn” English tale from another “worthy clerk,” none other than the father of Latin humanism, Francesco Petrarch, who in turn had translated *his* version of the story into Latin from Giovanni Boccaccio’s work, the *Decameron*. From here, the plot only

thickens: whereas Boccaccio's version of the tale, whose protagonist is female, was in Italian and hence could be understood by female audiences, Petrarch's translation of the story into Latin returned it to a male readership, the *literati*. Later, when Chaucer rendered the story in "pleyn" English, a different vulgar tongue, his clerk directs the tale back towards the 'noble wyves,' purposefully restoring it to a female audience (line 1118). In so doing, Chaucer also changed the meaning of Petrarch's tale, which had supplanted Boccaccio's own story to become the authoritative version.

As many have noted, Petrarch was the first to see the tale itself as a metaphor or parable for translation: the story concerns a poor woman named Griselda, who upon marrying a noble lord, was clothed in new and wondrous garb. Boccaccio notes that Griselda "seemed to have, together with her clothes, changed her mind and her manners."⁴⁰¹ Petrarch, who removed the story from a vernacular context and 'restored' it to his Latin, similarly notes: "so this simple peasant girl, new clad, with her disheveled tresses collected and made smooth, adorned with gems and coronet, was as it were suddenly transformed, so that the people hardly knew her."⁴⁰² Note the difference here: Boccaccio, who supposedly (according to Petrarch) fashioned the tale out of an oral culture and rewrote it in an Italian vernacular, notes the "mind and behavior" of the young woman have entirely changed. For Petrarch, who translated Griselda into Latin, it was "the people" who hardly knew her. Chaucer takes this a step further, playfully evoking 'translation' itself in his English text: "Unnethe [hardly] the peple hir knew for hire fairnesse, whan she *translated* was in swich richesse" (lines 384-385).

⁴⁰¹ Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. John Payne (New York: W. J. Black, 1920), 518.

⁴⁰² Robert Dudley French, *A Chaucer Handbook* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, inc., 1947), 297.

Nor is this the only occasion in the narrative when Griselda is translated from rags to riches. Later, in a test of fidelity, her husband banishes Griselda from his house, dressing her in tattered clothing once more. Of course, by the end of the tale, Griselda proves her faithfulness and earns back her fine garments, going through a final translation. Chaucer writes, perhaps somewhat shrewdly, that the ladies of the house “strepen hire out of hire rude array,” dressed her in a brightly colored garment, placed a glowing crown upon her head, and brought her into the grand hall where “she was honored as hire oghte” (lines 1116-1120). Whereas Petrarch clothed Griselda in the sumptuous dress of Latin, saving her from the rags of the “vulgar” tongue, we might say that Chaucer somewhat cheekily reverses this scenario, translating Griselda from a Latinate garb and giving her a new ‘crown’ fashioned out of the English language, as was her right. Hence, Griselda was not only a figure where authors of the ‘classical’ language of Latin attempted to inscribe their own authority, but also a site where different ‘vernacular’ authors could color with various meanings in their own negotiation over authority with preexisting authors as well as different audiences.

Astute readers have already realized that the major figure at play here isn’t really Griselda, but *translation*. That figure, translation, in fact performs what it theorizes, as Chaucer appropriates (i.e., translates) *translation itself* from Petrarch in order to endow it with an entirely new, and largely ‘vernacular,’ meaning. This figural reinterpretation was not incidental to the rest of the story’s narrative, but in fact was fundamental both to its interpretation as well as to how different authors situated the story linguistically and culturally. Furthermore, the ways in which translation is ‘figured’ as Griselda by Petrarch and Chaucer has implications not only for how premodern authors considered the

question of appropriation from another literary or cultural realm, but equally importantly, for how modern scholars have addressed the same problem.

A major work on the subject is Rita Copland's *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages*, wherein she defines some of Chaucer's oeuvre (as well as the works of many other 'vernacular' authors) as "secondary translations." Whereas 'primary' translation "identifies itself with exegetical claims of service to the source," or in other words, was subservient to the source text through *enarratio* [exegesis], secondary translation "achieves difference with the source by exploiting the inventional or productive powers of exegesis,"⁴⁰³ in effect actively displacing the source text through *inventio* [invention], which is part of the discipline of rhetoric, as opposed to grammar. This had implications for the authority of vernacular literary languages themselves, as Copland argues:

Whereas primary translation empowers the vernacular by inscribing it in the official discourse of exegesis, secondary translation makes the vernacular text the *subject* of that official discourse. It is through the disciplinary force of hermeneutics that the translator can discover — literally "invent" — the ascendancy of the vernacular.⁴⁰⁴

To a certain degree, Chaucer's *Griselda* is a "second translation" of a second translation, although Petrarch was writing in Latin, not Italian or English. In attempting to shape different literary communities via the same tale, albeit one told in different languages and charged with opposing meanings, Chaucer and Petrarch purposefully drew attention to previous authors whose literary authority they were borrowing from and supplanting,

⁴⁰³ Rita Copland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 223.

thematizing the authority of their own literary languages in the process. In this reading of Griselda as a figure for translation — which, arguably, was how Petrarch and Chaucer read her — we can see both authors not only appropriating this figure to serve different literary and communal ends, but also practicing a kind of pragmatic, performative theory of appropriation at the same time. Their texts describe what they bring about, in other words, and these performances are put into the larger service of different ideological ends, such as the supremacy of Latin humanism, or the cultivation of different interpretive communities, inclusive even of English-speaking women.

To a minor extent, the strategy of privileging *inventio* over *enarratio* resonates with the literary cultures I have previously investigated. Rūmī, for one, was more interested in reinterpreting and displacing the cultural ascendancy of his source material than he was in merely offering exegeses of those texts, as I will discuss in the next section. However, the concept of ‘secondary’ translation has obvious limitations, both within Europe and especially beyond it. As many scholars (beginning with Copeland herself) have shown, this productive yet ultimately narrow framework, rooted in the disciplines of a classical Liberal Arts education, does not account for a wider spectrum of ways in which literary appropriation and translation broadly occurred even within a single European language or region.⁴⁰⁵ Just as importantly, while the central figure of

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 197.

⁴⁰⁵ For instance, while Copeland and others have traced this “Oedipal desire in English literature” to “displace its Latin source” back to Dante, Alison Cornish has subsequently demonstrated that Dante’s own literary activity was predicated upon a much larger Italian movement of anonymous producers of *volgarizzamenti* who were much less concerned with bolstering the legitimacy of any ‘mother’ tongue. This movement in turn fostered a community of readers that made works such as the *Divine Comedy* possible to undertake. In Cornish’s estimation, these translators only wanted to “make useful knowledge available to those to whom it would otherwise be inaccessible,” unlike Dante’s own program of explicit appropriation and reinterpretation, which had “much more in common with the modern notion of a ‘transformation of one text into another’ held by the likes of Steiner, Borges and Benjamin than with the prosaic ‘transfer of a text from one language to another’ that describes most *volgarizzamento* of his contemporaries.” See Alison

“translation” speaks to how literary production in one language can shape literary production in another, translation was not necessarily *the* driving force of cross-cultural literary production in Rūm at this period in time. Nor did the authors of the literary works considered in the first three chapters understand their own literary production in terms of translation. Therefore, we ought to find a manner of conceptualizing the ‘bringing-across’ of literary forms and figures into a different language without relying exclusively on the figure of translation, whether it be Copeland’s understanding of secondary translation or the more utilitarian practice of *volgarizzamento*.

On the other end of the spectrum, Sheldon Pollock has sought to conceptualize the development of multiple vernacular languages in South Asia on a different scale by looking at how authors configured local literary languages—languages of Place—out of the cosmopolitan language of Sanskrit. Or, as Pollock put it in his dizzying work, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, “the languages of Place began to put aside the old oral idiom and to speak instead a new cosmopolitan vernacular, that synthetic register of an emergent regional literary language that localizes the full spectrum of expressive qualities of the superposed cosmopolitan code.”⁴⁰⁶ For Pollock, vernacularization was not equivalent to the European notion of *volgarizzamento*—translation of a particular text from Latin into a vernacular language—but rather a process by which “local languages are first admitted to literacy (what I sometimes call literization), then accommodated to “literature” as defined by preexisting cosmopolitan

Cornish, *Vernacular Translation in Dante's Italy: Illiterate Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 10.

⁴⁰⁶ Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 322.

models (literarization), and thereby unified and homogenized; eventually they come to be deployed in new projects of territorialization and, in some cases, ethnicization.”⁴⁰⁷

Ultimately, Pollock considers this process not only in literary and linguistic terms, but as a force which shaped and even called into being new communities. He argues that this process occurred not only in South Asia, but across Europe as well, especially during the time from 1000-1500 C.E.. According to Pollock, it was during this period when superposed cosmopolitan literary codes, imprinted upon different vernacular languages, helped to homogenize peoples and places through the configuration of new literary languages:

For it was during the course of the vernacular millennium that cultures and communities were ideationally and discursively invented, or at least provided with a more self-conscious voice. This naturalization took place by a double process of reduction and differentiation: As unmarked dialect was turned into unified standard, heterogeneous practice into homogenized culture, and undifferentiated space into conceptually organized place, vernacularization created new regional worlds. Inside these worlds was the indigenous and natural; outside, the exogenous and artificial.⁴⁰⁸

Pollock rightly cautions that this process of “reduction and differentiation” did not occur in the same manner in every place, and other scholars have begun to push back against the ways in which some of his conjectures might be mapped onto similar processes ongoing in Europe. Alison Cornish, for instance, has noted that the earliest vernacularization movement in Italy, driven by *volgarizzamento*, more closely resembled the cosmopolitan language of Sanskrit than any of the South Asian vernaculars in that it

⁴⁰⁷ Sheldon Pollock, "India in the Vernacular Millennium: Literary Culture and Polity, 1000-1500," *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998): 41.

had no sponsoring state, did not theorize its own universality, and “came into being not through political domination, but through ‘the circulation of traders, literati, religious professionals, freelance adventurers’.”⁴⁰⁹ Likewise, we ought to be cautious about approaching any ‘new regional worlds’ in Rūm, if indeed they can be said to have existed in those terms, through methodological frameworks developed for other regions and languages, even non-European ones.

Still, as with Copeland’s notion of ‘secondary translation’ in Europe, whereby vernacular authors reinterpreted and displaced their Latin sources in order to invent the ascendancy of the vernacular language, there are important parallels to be drawn between the development of new literary languages in South Asia and the interconnected literary languages of Rūm. As I have argued in the previous chapters, authors of Armenian, Persian, and Turkish in Rūm encoded their literary languages with what might be conceived of as a widely recognizable cosmopolitan manner of communicating, especially in their appropriation of different literary figures, discourses, and even poetic meters, as evidenced by claiming the ‘style’ and ‘voice’ of literary genres from other places or languages for new contexts. Similarly, like Pollock, I have argued that these authors mobilized their own literary languages in part to cultivate their own interpretive communities. Additionally, Pollock’s understanding of vernacularization, by which a language is first admitted to literacy and only then admitted to literature, frequently in the service of territorialization and ethnicization, is also evocative of the early development of Middle Armenian, which Kevork Bardakjian has argued was configured as the

⁴⁰⁸ Pollock, “India in the Vernacular Millennium,” 42.

⁴⁰⁹ Cornish, *Vernacular Translation in Dante's Italy*, 7.

administrative language of the Cilician kingdom before its widespread adoption as a literary language.⁴¹⁰

However, there are several factors which do not map well onto the literary landscapes of Rūm at this time. First, as I will go into more detail in the next section of this chapter, the specific authors which I have previously examined are arguably less occupied with territorialization, or in Pollock's terms, turning "undifferentiated space into conceptually organized place,"⁴¹¹ than they are with a sense of being *out* of place, *lacking* place, or even *displaced*. We remember, again, that for many of the peoples of Rūm since the coming of the Saljūqs, migration and displacement were not only literary topoi, but an ongoing facet of life. Particularly in the Armenian case, the loss of a territory and the absence of state loomed large in the social and literary imagination of the authors we have so far investigated.

Second, in the case of all the authors previously examined, this *out-of-placeness* or in Šūfī terms 'no-placeness' is conceived of as more of a religious problem—or at the least, a problem with different confessional valences and repercussions—than an 'ethnic' problem. In fact, we see Rūmī and Solṭān Valad reaching beyond any single ethnic group in an attempt to weave heterogeneous communities more tightly into the spiritual and social fabric of the Šūfī lodge in Konya. Solṭān Valad in particular adopted colloquial Greek and Turkish as literary languages not because he wanted to establish monolingual regional worlds, but rather to strengthen a transregional phenomenon of what would become tariqa based Šūfism, drawn along confessional rather than ethnic or linguistic

⁴¹⁰ Kevork Bardakjian, "Of Calques, Loan Words, and the Rise of Modern Armenian: Some Observations," unpublished.

⁴¹¹ Pollock, "India in the Vernacular Millennium," 42.

lines.⁴¹² By a similar token, while the Cilician court may have configured Middle Armenian as a literary language for administrative purposes, the new Armenian literary language greatly proliferated after the fall of the kingdom, transcending individual regions, but also enforcing confessional boundaries and promulgating the teachings of the Armenian church in transregional ways.⁴¹³

If we want to begin charting the complex relationships between the multiple literary languages in Rūm, regardless of scale, we arguably need a different conceptual mapping of the literary landscape than we have seen in the frameworks above. Even more important than issues of territorialization and ethnicization are the basic concepts we use to figure these languages in relationship to one another in the first place: whether those languages can be characterized as cosmopolitan and transregional (like Latin) or vernacular and placed (like Middle English). Arguably, in the frameworks we have observed hitherto, a more distinct hierarchy structures the relationships between a single cosmopolitan language, such as Latin in Europe or Sanskrit in South Asia, and the vernacular literatures within those same regions. In Rūm, there are a variety of intersecting ‘cosmopolitan’ literary languages at play, in addition to more nascent literary languages which were not necessarily ‘bounded,’ either. Arguably, at this period in time, none of the literary languages in this region were ‘placed’ in the same way that Pollock

⁴¹² Being (at least rhetorically) out of place also had its advantages. For the Persian and Turkish speaking Sūfī authors in the previous chapters, claiming to be out of place allowed one to adopt a mantle of spiritual authority, as those who are truly devoted to God are strangers, or *gharīb*s, in this life, like the prophet himself. Both Armenian and Jewish authors adopted the same terminology, rooted in the figure of the *gharīb*, to describe an analogous concept in Christianity and Judaism, respectively. Being (actually) out of place had its severe drawbacks as well; as we have seen, clergymen in the Armenian church were anxious that their scattered flock would convert to other religions, and consequently needed to adopt a way of engaging with these disparate communities more immediately.

⁴¹³ Furthermore, as I have argued, this ‘common’ Armenian literary language was meant to operate within a multilingual world, borrowing heavily and reinterpreting the literary forms and figures of others, in part because those figures and forms were highly recognizable and already popular.

understands the term, but that doesn't negate the need to locate these languages within a relational geographic space before we can assess how appropriation occurred on any scale.

The need for an alternative conceptual mapping of this literary landscape is compounded by the fact that even the cosmopolitan literary languages in this region were not all 'cosmopolitan' to the same degree or in the same way, which has implications for the linguistic and cultural directionality of literary appropriation. We ought to begin with a closer look at what exactly is 'cosmopolitan' about any transregional literary language. Karla Mallette has productively defined cosmopolitan languages against the national languages of modernity in several relevant ways: these languages were "not bounded by territory and, in fact, held a far-reaching, if discontinuous, currency"; they "gave rise to a multitude of other languages and idioms"; were "self-consciously designed to resist historical change, and therefore refused to be shaped by spoken linguistic practice"; and finally "their capacity to resist change through time allowed them to communicate across the millennia."⁴¹⁴ According to this understanding, the cosmopolitan languages of Rūm were Classical Greek and Classical Arabic, the latter of which can be found in Persian and Turkish works during this period. We remember that Rūmī quoted the famous ḥadīth—*Islam began as a gharīb*—in Classical Arabic before he reinterpreted it in Persian through his sermons and the *Maṣnavī*, for instance. Similarly, 'Āşık Paşa incorporated Classical Arabic into his defense of the Turkish literary language in his *Garīb-nāme*, not to usurp this cosmopolitan language, but to work alongside it; to supplement it; drawing from its religious and cultural authority and legitimizing literary

Turkish in the process. Yet to a certain extent, for many sovereigns and religious figures during this period, the major language of literary production wasn't Arabic, but Persian.

As we have previously seen, Persian obviously was not a cosmopolitan language in the way that Mallette defines the term here. First, it was a spoken language, and unlike Latin or Classical Arabic, it was a mother tongue in many parts of the world. However, it was cosmopolitan in its ability to transcend if not time, then at least ethnicity, space, and to a certain extent, even religion. In fact, from about the 8th century, Early New Persian was used in a wide variety of scripts, including Hebrew, Manichean, Syriac, and Avestan, corresponding to the different ethnic and religious groups who used those alphabets.⁴¹⁵ New Persian especially proliferated in the Arabic script at the Samanid (819-1005) court in Bukhara, which oversaw the translation of scientific texts from Arabic to Persian and patronized new Persian poets, as did the Saffarids of Sistān. Later, when the Ghaznavids (977-1186), who were of Central Asian and Turkic origin, invaded and deposed the Samanids, they still patronized New Persian literature, as did the Saljūq Turks, who conquered the Ghaznavids in the eleventh century. Persian continued to be used as a literary and administrative language, as it was adopted not only by the Il-khanids (1256-1353), but even spread to other regions in Central Asia, Anatolia, and northern India, where it was later adopted by the early modern Mughal Empire. But it was during this period of New Persian, towards the 11th century, when the language had adopted a large

⁴¹⁴ Karla Mallette, "The Metropolis and Its Languages: Baghdad and Venice," in *Cosmopolitanism and the Middle Ages*, eds. John M. Ganim and Shayne Legassie (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 21.

⁴¹⁵ Ludwig Paul, "Persian Language i. Early New Persian," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 2013, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/persian-language-1-early-new-persian>.

number of Classical Arabic loan-words, becoming not only an “Islamic language,” but “*the* Islamic language of the Eastern Caliphate,” as Ludwig Paul has noted.⁴¹⁶

We have already seen the ways in which the ‘cosmopolitan’ literary languages of Classical Arabic and Persian, the macro-languages of literary production in Islam during this period, both coexisted and competed with each other in Konya. If we return to the case of Rūmī, the *Masnavī* initially seems to be a kind of “secondary translation” of the Qur’ān, serving both as an analogical reinterpretation of the Qur’ān in a new language, as well as attempting even to displace it and its authority. But the framework of ‘*translatio studii*,’ even loosely borrowed, begins to break down when we consider that the Qur’ān was not the only work which Rūmī was reinterpreting. It was the Persian works of ‘Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī, written in previous centuries and in other locations, which Rūmī also wanted to revoice—not only in the same meter and style, but even in the same language. As he did with his own *Masnavī*, he also posited the supremacy of (his interpretation of) ‘Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī over even the Qur’ān, but ultimately he folded all three sources into a new interpretation, meant to serve his own local and contemporary needs, in the book of the *Masnavī*. By a similar token, the different branches of literary Turkish (across Central Asia, Rūm, and North Africa) drew unequally and differently from Persian and Arabic ‘meters and styles’ in various competitive ways, enabling Turkish speaking authors to ‘invent’ the ascendancy of their own literary language. Hence, the integrated cultures of literary production in Rūm cannot always be linearly charted from a single ‘dominant’ or ascendant literary culture to a lesser, or at least more ‘localized’ and homogeneous culture—instead, we are witnessing multiple forms of literary reinterpretation within a

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

competing arena of different cosmopolitan literary languages, mother tongues, and mixtures of local and translocal forms of knowledge.

The Armenian example illustrates another dimension of this polyvocal, multilingual literary landscape. During this same period, and in this same shared geographic space, Classical Armenian was arguably a cosmopolitan language of a different sort. While it did not freely transcend ethnicity as did Persian, it did transcend time, governed by grammar and resistant to change. Classical Armenian was possibly never a spoken language, but always an inscribed one—hence its designation as *grabar*, the written language. In addition, like ‘colloquial’ or ‘peripheral’ [*ezerakan*] Armenian, which began to flourish as a literary language during this period, Classical Armenian likewise was not bounded by territory or polity after the fall of the Cilician kingdom, but had been exported as a constructed language beyond the Armenian homeland. And yet, the earliest poetic works of Middle Armenian were largely unconcerned with any process of ‘*volgarizzamento*’ or its equivalent, as the translation of Classical Armenian literature into a mother tongue was not a concern at this time. Instead, as in the case of Rūmī, what was demanded from the common tongue was to fold together a plethora of different literary ‘voices’ from a variety of literary languages, at the very least including Classical Armenian, Persian and probably also Turkish, into a Christian framework, as I have argued in chapter three. While Pollock notes that those who wrote in the vernacular tongue chose a literary language which would not travel, in some ways the Armenian ‘vernacular’ *needed* to travel across great distances in order to reach audiences on distant shores, across multiple polities.

Consequently, it seems more appropriate to view the lands of Rūm at this time through an analogous argument, posited by Mallette, about the metropolis of Venice (ca. 1250): “In Venice, it seems inaccurate or at least incomplete to speak of a *cosmopolitan language*: rather, the cosmopolitan metropolis speaks multiple languages, networked to each other according to a complex, ever-shifting calculus.”⁴¹⁷ One of the paradoxes of the cosmopolitan language, Mallette notes, is that “it represents itself as unique and peerless, yet at the same time creates a dizzying multiplicity of links to adjacent languages.”⁴¹⁸ What we’re really looking at in Rūm at this time, I would suggest, is not a strict model of “classical” and “vernacular” literary languages as in the case of Europe, or even necessarily Pollock’s productive reformulation of the vernacular to describe the configuration of South Asian literary languages, a process which he views as driven by political centers. What concerns me here is rather the need to navigate this “ever shifting” linguistic calculus and “multiplicity of links to adjacent languages” in the case of Rūm: to consider a non-binary, multidirectional way of thinking about these communicative and literary strategies—these scales of appropriation—across several languages, peoples, and places. This approach must be cognizant of how premodern authors shaped their own literary production and heterogeneous communities, as well as balance more contemporary ways of theorizing the cross-cultural situatedness of multiple literary languages within the same geographic space.

To this end, just as the figure of Griselda provides a site to for understanding exchange across literary in premodern Italy and England, the figure of the *gharīb* can also help us develop such an approach in a region where the intersections between languages

⁴¹⁷ Mallette, “The Metropolis and Its Languages,” 30.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

and literary conventions are less clearly defined. However, there are some differences which bear foregrounding here: unlike Griselda, the gharīb did not necessary travel across discrete texts. Nor did the gharīb enter into the literary languages of New Persian, Middle Armenian, and Oghuz and Ottoman Turkish from a single ‘superposed’ set of literary conventions—what Pollock calls a cosmopolitan literary ‘code.’ Rather, by revisiting our previous case studies in a more integrated manner, I would suggest that there emerges a broader practice of composing in widely accessible poetic ‘voices,’ many of which swung multiple literary conventions into new orbits of meaning-making.

This non-linear dimension of cross-cultural ‘interaction’ becomes easier to distinguish once we move beyond the narrow realms of language, texturing our literary landscape with the social one which preceded it. In fact, travelers and sojourners were often surprised by the blurred lines between ‘Christians’ and ‘Muslims’ of this region. When Nāṣer Khosraw (d. 1088) traveled through the eastern lands of Rūm in the eleventh century, for instance, he noted the co-mingling of Arabs, Persians, and Armenians,⁴¹⁹ as even pork was sold in the bazaar alongside lamb, and men and women drank wine in shops without inhibition. Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240) also expressed surprise at a similar laxity in Konya, “particularly the lack of enforcement of certain shari‘a principles with respect to non-Muslims there,” as Kafadar has observed.⁴²⁰ Similarly, when the Moroccan traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa passed through the lands of Rūm, he marveled that the Muslim women who attended him did not wear a veil, but seemed to mix freely with unrelated

⁴¹⁹ Nāṣer-e Khosraw, *Nāṣer-e Khosraw's Book of Travels (= Safarnāma)*, Translated by W. M. Thackston (Albany, N.Y.: Bibliotheca Persica, 1986), 6.

⁴²⁰ See Cemal Kafadar, "A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum," in *History and Ideology Architectural Heritage of the "Lands of Rum"*, edited by Sibel Bozdoğan and Gülru Necipoğlu, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 10.

men.⁴²¹ This happened institutionally as well: as we have seen, not only did Sufi lodges employ Christian practices to draw in non-Muslim peoples, but at the same time, Yovhannēs Erznkats‘i modeled his own urban confraternity off the Islamic *futuwwa* movement, arguably making the Armenian church more competitive in Rūm. Such examples speak to the non-linear adaptation and even internalization of a variety of social practices and conceptual ‘languages,’ many of them religious in character.

Similarly, in the following section, I will argue that an underlying plurality cannot be excised from the figure of the *gharīb*, which not only serves an ‘adjacent link’ between Arabic, Armenian, Persian, and Turkish literary *languages*, but also between intersecting literary *conventions* and broader semiotics which belong to no single language. Just as Chaucer and Petrarch read *Griselda* as a performative parable for the nature of translation into and out of European ‘vernaculars,’ and therefore as a site where cultural and literary authority was negotiated and contested, I read the *gharīb* as a site where different strategies of literary exchange between individual authors, intersecting cosmopolitan *codes*, and heterogeneously mixed societies were played out in Rūm. The *gharīb* is not only a product of recombining the literary forms and figures of ‘others,’ but also performs and even constitutes this ongoing process; it simultaneously signifies the entrance of something foreign into our midst while it performatively brings about what it describes. Through my examination of these polyvocal *gharībs*, I will argue that a premodern practice of *revoicing* emerges which can help us to think about the “ever-shifting calculus” of how literary languages develop and change alongside, in concert with, and in opposition to one another within a shared geographic space.

⁴²¹ See Roxanne Leslie Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 84.

3. A Practice of Revoicing: Literary Strategies for Meaning Making and Community Building

This section proposes a lateral mapping of Rūm’s literary landscape by examining how different authors appropriated the literary forms, figures, and in some cases, individual works of ‘others’ in order to bring their own audiences into a specific communal and confessional orientation. In particular, this section looks at how the figure of the *gharīb*, itself an appropriation from ‘elsewhere,’ served the remarkably similar communicative and literary strategies of different Persian, Turkish, and Armenian speaking authors. Building off the argument of the previous section, wherein I attempted to show how the multilingual literary landscape of Rūm does not entirely fit the other models of “classical” and “vernacular” literary languages, here I seek to show how these premodern authors similarly conceptualized a more multilateral and open relationship, further textured by the intersections of different ‘cosmopolitan’ languages, between Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Armenian within this geographical space. Similarly, in examining the different mobilizations of the *gharīb* in Persian, Turkish, and Armenian, I will argue that these authors do not necessarily interpret particular literary figures or forms as being exclusively “native” to any one literary language.

In short, rather than conceptualize the relationships between these different literary languages in terms of superposed influence, which implies the stronger culture

imprinting itself upon a weaker, more passive culture, this section shows how these authors understood their own literary production—either in theory or in praxis—in more dynamic and fluid terms, and that they furthermore did so in part through the figure of the *gharīb*. While the theological aims of these authors were different, they all took part in what I have characterized as the greater cultures of literary appropriation in Rūm. By comparatively outlining the communicative and literary strategies which I investigated in more detail within the first three chapters, I will demonstrate how these authors all employed a particular form of literary production which I define, for the lack of an equivalent term, as a practice of revoicing.

Our lateral, planar mapping of the relationships between literary languages in Rūm begins with Rūmī himself. As I argued in the previous section, the ‘*gharīb*’ foregrounds different notions of what is ‘outside,’ while attempting to bring that outside inwards, into the presence of a particular community, reconfiguring what it means to be native. For Rūmī, the ‘outside’ had several dimensions, but it first and foremost represented a metaphysical plane where language cannot go—the uncanny realm of Truth [*Ḥaqq*], or in other words, God. In neoplatonic terms, because Truth, like the concept of Love, cannot be adequately addressed in any language, it resides outside all of language. Rūmī admits this limitation of language itself in the first story of the *Maṣnavī*:

What words can I say to describe or explain Love?
Since when I come to Love, I am embarrassed of them all.

Although the exegeses of the tongue are bright,
Love beyond language is brightest.

As the pen quickens to bring forth writing,

the pen that approaches Love is cleft in two.⁴²²

Because of this basic failure of language to access ineffable Truth [*Ḥaqq*], which is beyond language, the extra-linguistic dimension of God has a radical alterity to both language and structures of human thought. However, just because language has necessary limitations for Rūmī, that does not mean language isn't useful—only that it can't provide direct access to God.⁴²³ Consequently, at the end of the first story in the *Masnavī*, Rūmī notes that it is “better that the secret of lovers be spoken through the stories of others.”⁴²⁴ Through useful figures and analogues, we can talk *around* the limits of language, leading the spiritual adept towards union with God, or *tawḥīd*, even where language cannot go.⁴²⁵

Therefore, when Rūmī describes the ineffability of certain neoplatonic forms, such as Truth or Love, he frequently uses the figure of strangeness to evoke the entrance of these higher forms into our midst, as they conceptually become “native” in a particular language and culture even while remaining fundamentally alien to language itself. As I argued in chapter one, this figure of strangeness is often conceptualized as the *gharīb*, which has either come directly from this metaphysical “outside” or is leading a particular community toward it.

As we have seen, Rūmī also used the figure of the *gharīb* to evoke these neoplatonic concepts and call attention to the mediating role of language to a particular audience. One notable example of this is comes from Rūmī's *Dīvān*, wherein he

⁴²² Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Masnavī-ye Ma'navī*, ed. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, vol. 1 (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1984), 9.

⁴²³ Obviously, unlike the post-structuralist anxiety that language cannot access an extra-linguistic reality, Rūmī recognizes the limits of language without denying that Truth, or that extra-linguistic reality, exists.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴²⁵ Hence, strangers and strangeness are necessary in order to better illuminate one's own spiritual condition.

describes the intersections between the *gharīb*, language, and earthly analogues to Neoplatonic forms:

Love [*‘eshq*] is a stranger [*gharīb*], and its tongue is strange [*gharīb*]
Just as the Arab stranger [*gharībī*] in Persia [*‘ajam*].

Arise, for I have brought you a story,
Listen neither more or less to the slave:

Listen to this strange [*gharībāna*] speech,
A strange [*gharīb*] story has come, just [as strange] as its teller.⁴²⁶

As he does elsewhere, here Rūmī uses a worldly example of strangeness—the Arab stranger in Persia—in order to help his audience comprehend its neoplatonic counterpart, the presence of Love in our midst, which by definition must be described using strange speech. Equally important in this passage is the notion of the “teller,” the one who speaks strangeness, who by pointing us towards the ‘outside’ also seems strange, or *gharīb*. As I have argued in the first chapter, Rūmī and his own disciples frequently thought of authoritative figures in Islam as *gharīb*s, including the Prophet himself, and even sometimes identified with *gharīb*s in order to distinguish themselves against (who they perceived as) corrupters of Islam.

In part through the figure of the *gharīb*, Rūmī presents a linguistic paradox which is altogether different from the paradox of the cosmopolitan language posited by Mallette: whereas the cosmopolitan language represents itself as “unique and peerless” while simultaneously creating “a multiplicity of links to adjacent languages,” Rūmī both

⁴²⁶ Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Kollīyyāt-e Shams*, ed. Badī‘ al-Zamān Forūzānfar, vol. 4 (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1977), 85.

downplays the theological primacy of *any* language while still asserting the necessity of Language-as-such. Because no language can fully access the Divine, this in part de-centers the right of any literary language to claim absolute, immutable ascendancy over other languages, at least in revealing hidden spiritual meanings. Hence, we see Rūmī playfully offering theological exegeses on rather quotidian linguistic utterances from a variety of languages. For example, as noted in chapter one, Rūmī transformed a bawdy Arabic poem about prostitution into a commentary about spiritual poverty.⁴²⁷ Similarly, in the marketplace, Rūmī turned the Turkish cry of a fox seller—*delkū* [*fox*—into a meditative question in Persian, *del kū* [*where is the heart?*].⁴²⁸

But the most important instance of Rūmī de-centering the primacy of the other cosmopolitan language of Islam, Classical Arabic, is through the composition of his most famous work, the *Maṣnavī*. As noted in the first chapter, Rūmī’s own disciples could not comprehend the “style of strange [*gharīb*] meanings” of the didactic poems in Persian by Sanā’ī and ‘Aṭṭār, and therefore requested that Rūmī write a new book “in the mode [*tarz*] of the *Elāhī-nāma* of Ḥakīm [Sanā’ī] but in the meter [*vazn*] of the *Manteq al-ṭeyr*” in order to make those strange meanings accessible to the local audience in Konya.⁴²⁹ Rūmī famously obliged, incorporating the “meter and mode” of those previous Persian works into a new didactic *maṣnavī*, but he also reinterpreted the Qur’ān and ḥadīth in the process. Yet Rūmī explicitly made it clear that his new work was not an “exegesis” or *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān, but something else entirely. If Rūmī did not consider the *Maṣnavī* a reinterpretation of those previous works—as his disciples frequently did—how did he conceptualize his own literary project?

⁴²⁷ Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Aflākī, *Manāqeb al-‘ārefīn*, vol. 1, 109.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 356.

As I argued in the first chapter, Rūmī's refusal to hierarchically privilege the original cosmopolitan language of Islam, Classical Arabic, over any other language is reflected in the following exchange, reported by Solṭān Valad, between Rūmī and one of his companions:

One of the companions complained to my honorable father: "The scholars were debating with me: 'Why do they call the *Maṣnavī* the Qur'ān?' I answered that it is the exegesis [*tafsīr*] of the Qur'ān." Verily, my father was silent a moment; then he bellowed: "Oh [you] dog! Why should it not be [the Qur'ān]! Oh jackass! Why should it not be [the Qur'ān]? Oh [brother of a] whore! Why should it not be [the Qur'ān]!"⁴³⁰

Solṭān Valad goes on to report that according to Rūmī, "the speech [*kalām*] of God" emanates from the hearts of those who know divine secrets, regardless of what language those secrets were uttered through. Because the speech of God precedes language, it ultimately doesn't matter whether a text is "Syriac, whether it is the 'seven oft-repeated verses' [*sab' al-maṣānī*] of the Qur'ān, whether it be Hebrew, or whether it be Arabic."⁴³¹ The implication here is that such a position leaves Rūmī free to weigh the "divine secrets" of the heart equally, disregarding language or history in pursuit of a linguistically and temporally transcendental Truth, which he figures elsewhere as essentially "gharīb" in relation to humankind.

In this sense, Rūmī's *Maṣnavī* presents the opposite to Copeland's understanding of "secondary translation." Rather than "invent" the ascendancy of Persian, which was already an authoritative literary and administrative language across great portions of the

⁴²⁹ Ibid., vol. 2, 740.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 291.

⁴³¹ Ibid., 291.

world at this time, Rūmī instead moves to *displace* the ascendancy of the major literary languages, including Persian, if perhaps only in theological matters. In so doing, Rūmī attempted to create a more multilateral relationship between languages whereby his authority would be coequal and coeval even with the Qur’ān’s, if not even surpass the Qur’ān. Although the Qur’ān technically could not be translated, according to Rūmī, it could at least have analogs which pointed towards the same transcendental Reality, as he claimed his *Masnavī* did. In short, Rūmī’s implication here is that which is beyond language—what we might think of as the truly gharīb—cannot be claimed as native to any language. Neoplatonic ‘meaning’ must always be estranged from human speech.

While Rūmī’s own theorizations about the limitations of language vis-a-vis an extra-linguistic reality, as well as his lateral remapping of the relationships between literary languages, sounds somewhat post-structuralist from our perspective,⁴³² he had an extremely practical reason for doing so. Again, as I argued previously, Rūmī was exceptionally sensitive to the needs of the spiritual and social community which he was attempting to foster in Konya. His primary mission was to build a religious community around a particular practice of Islam, an undertaking which, in fact, the sovereigns of the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm had patronized him to do. Arguably, part of the enormous success of that mission is due to the fact that Rūmī was highly aware of the need to communicate his teachings in a resonant, and even popular, way. As he noted himself, the people of Rūm were “lacking in divine secrets” when he arrived in Konya, but they loved poetic verse and musical instruments, which “agreed with the temperament of the people.”⁴³³ Rūmī likened this discovery to the realization of a doctor who, after learning

⁴³² Barring, of course, that Rūmī obviously did believe in a transcendental Truth beyond language.

⁴³³ Ibid., 207-8.

that his patient doesn't enjoy the taste of medicine, blends his remedies with a sweeter concoction. In this case, that concoction was brewed with pleasing literary (and musical) forms and figures, some of which he appropriated from other Persian and Arabic material, such as the *gharīb*, but all of which he employed for the explicit purpose of forming a particular social and spiritual community in Konya.

Part of the reason why Rūmī labored to dispel the hierarchy of Classical Arabic in general (but also the ascendancy of the Qur'ān in particular) over his own literary production was because even in Konya, it was reportedly controversial to weave together these different literary forms and styles in this popular mode of communicating through poetry and music. Aflākī claims that the poet Amir Bahā' al-Dīn-e Qāne'ī asserted that Sanā'ī was not a Muslim for the very reason that “he has incorporated āyāts from the Great Qur'ān into his poetry and made them into rhymes.”⁴³⁴ Rūmī not only did so in order to reach widespread audiences, but he even blended the supposed distinctions between ‘high’ literary forms and popular culture, sometimes going so far as to incorporate highly sexual and bawdy tales alongside his reinterpretations of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. Displacing other literary traditions and even literary languages freed Rūmī to point to towards the same transcendental signifieds, like God, Truth, Love, and Reality, but from a different linguistic and literary vantage point. It also allowed him to reinterpret the Qur'ān and ḥadīth through a resonant medium which “agreed with the temperament of the people,” who as Rūmī tells us would not have been as receptive to his message otherwise.

In some ways, while Rūmī's lateral remapping of the relationships between literary languages served a particular aim, it also provided a means of legitimization for

the early authors of Oghuz Turkish as a literary language. Soon after Rūmī's death, his son, Solṭān Valad, was quick to capitalize on this multilateral understanding of different literary languages within a shared space, as was 'Āṣīk Paşa, another early adapter of Oghuz Turkish as a literary language in Rūm. First, let us return our attention to Solṭān Valad, who was a pivotal figure in spreading his father's teachings to new audiences, both locally and translocally, throughout the lands of Rūm. While Solṭān Valad accomplished this through a number of means, such as by sending disciples to distant cities, he also engaged in a similar practice of interpretation by re-writing, or 're-voicing,' previous literary works in order to reach audiences who were "outside" the linguistic scope of his father's *Maṣnavī*. In addition, Solṭān Valad also appropriated the figure of the gharīb in order to explain the inclusion of different literary languages and peoples within his own work, the *Rabāb-nāma*, or *Book of the Rebec*.

As I argued previously, just as Rūmī's companions requested a new didactic work of poetry in the "meter and style" of 'Aṭṭār and Sanā'ī in order to make those "strange meanings" comprehensible to a local audience, Solṭān Valad's audience desired a new book in the meter [*vazn*] of the *Maṣnavī*, as the companions had already "grown accustomed to that *vazn* from many recitations" of Rūmī's own work.⁴³⁵ Yet Solṭān Valad made it clear that he not only intended to write in a familiar *vazn*, but also to reinterpret his father's *Maṣnavī* for new audiences. In fact, Solṭān Valad announced this basic intention in the title of his work. Whereas the central conceit of the *Maṣnavī* is the reed (flute), which grieves of its separation from the reed-bed, the central conceit of the *Rabāb-nāma* is, of course, the *rabāb*: a bowed and stringed instrument comprising many

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 221.

parts, unlike the homogenous reed stalk. Ingeniously, Rūmī's use of the reed also served as a metaphor for the text of the *Maṣnavī* itself, which elaborates on our estrangement from God just as the reed is estranged from the reed-bed. The famous opening of the *Maṣnavī*, "Listen to this reed [*ney*] as it makes grievance, it tells the tale of separations," additionally draws attention to the very mediums of communication which Rūmī employed, as the reed flute, like the *rabāb*, was used to accompany recitations of the *Maṣnavī* before an audience.

Solṭān Valad ambitiously expanded on the concept of the homogenous reed, the figural representation of text and recitation, through the *rabāb*, which was an altogether different figure. Whereas the reed comprised one part, and hence one voice, the *rabāb* would speak with a multiplicity of voices, the heterogeneous parts of a more complicated musical instrument. Let us return here to the passage from the opening of chapter two, wherein Solṭān Valad describes this heterogeneity as the speech not of compatriots, but of *dissimilar* and *displaced* *gharībs*:

His Excellency Mavlānā [Rūmī] said that the reed groans because it has become separated from its reed-bed and from its loved ones; due to this separation it laments in exile [*ghorbat*]. Within the reed there is no more than one lament, but within the *rabāb* there are [many] laments and separations, because [the *rabāb*] is composed of *gharībs*, since each one [part] has been separated from its homeland [*vaṭan*] and own kind, like skin and hair and iron and wood. Due to separation from their own kind, all of these groan and lament. Thus, the moaning and groaning from the reed would be greater within the *rabāb*.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁵ Solṭān Valad, *Rabāb-nāma*, ed. 'Alī Solṭānī Gerdfarāmarzī (Tehran: McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, Tehran Branch, 1980), 1.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

Solṭān Valad has often been unfairly dismissed as a much less gifted writer than his father, yet his use of the rabāb here, as an instrument comprising many gharībs, in some ways speaks to a greater literary ambition than even Rūmī. Besides indicating a musical instrument, rabāb has a secondary meaning of *'ahd*; a covenant, treaty, or oath. Literally the rabāb is that which binds a community together, even if the members of that community are unlike one another. As it turns out, the gharībs in this community are not only dissimilar, but have each come from different “homelands” and are currently cut off from their “own kind.” Solṭān Valad is also aware that the ‘voices’ of each of these members of the community are distinctly different. Despite this, out of the multitude of dissimilar gharībs, the rabāb is able to produce a unifying lament about exile from God, who is our true “homeland” [*vaṭan*].

Solṭān Valad’s figure of the rabāb as the unifier of many gharībs, each lamenting in a different voice, ultimately speaks to his ambitions both in Konya and in Rūm as a whole. We ought to remember that during the 14th century, Ṣūfism was gradually institutionalized around the practices of different charismatic Ṣūfī leaders, such as Rūmī, who were made into foundational figures of new Ṣūfī orders by their subsequent followers. Solṭān Valad likewise wanted his father’s teachings to have a lasting legacy in Rūm, a region populated by Persians, Arabs, Greeks, Armenians, Turks, Mongols, Tatars, Jews, and others. Rather than evoke a sphere beyond language or history, Solṭān Valad’s figure of the gharīb instead reflected the heterogeneous and fundamentally mixed social fabric of Konya itself, imaged through a new and unifying covenant which was ultimately rooted in the teachings of Rūmī.

However, in another sense, the figure of different gharībs coexisting in a new rabāb also served to laterally restructure the relationships between different literary languages. While the aforementioned passage from the introduction of the *Rabāb-nāma* was written in Persian, it presented an argument to a Persian-speaking audience that different gharībs were necessary to create this new covenant—the multifaceted instrument of the rabāb—which Solṭān Valad is careful to point out was “particular and connected” to Rūmī. As I argued in chapter two, the marvelous figure of different gharībs coming together to form a new rabāb ultimately stands as a performative metaphor for the book of the *Rabāb-nāma* itself, which was composed using Classical Arabic, Persian, ‘colloquial’ Turkish, and ‘colloquial’ Greek, all of which worked in concert polyvocally towards the creation of a new social and religious community. In a tangible, textual way, the *Rabāb-nāma*, really did gather together a variety of languages—even going so far as to encode colloquial Turkish and Greek in the meter of the *Maṣnavī*—in order to articulate Solṭān Valad’s vision for this new covenant directly to these different “gharībs” themselves.

At the same time, the figure of gharībs textually constituting this new rabāb serves as a performative metaphor for Solṭān Valad’s greater ambitions in the city of Konya and beyond, as he desired to bring together various peoples by adopting an easily accessible manner of communicating. Multilingual text and multiethnic society are folded together in a new ‘rabāb,’ but unlike the “indigenous and natural” regional worlds that Pollock describes in the rise of the South Asian vernaculars, here those regional worlds are created by gathering several different exogenous elements whose many separations from God and homeland are foregrounded, and not minimized. Like the figure of the gharīb

itself, Solṭān Valad created a new “inside” by stitching together—not dissolving or abolishing—several different linguistic and ethnic “outsides.”

Finally, much like Chaucer and Petrarch, Solṭān Valad was highly aware of the intellectual heavy lifting his figures of gharīb and rabāb were doing, as they served performatively to represent and enact his greater strategy of forming a new covenant linguistically and socially. We ought to recall that unlike his father, Solṭān Valad wanted to be transparent about what each of his figures and metaphors represented: as he noted, “this which is articulated through the reed and rabāb and so on—which themselves lament in separation—is all metaphor [*mosta ‘ār*] and figure [*majāz*].” Solṭān Valad then states plainly that the reed and rabāb both “lament that from the higher meaning of reunion with the Creator, ‘we have passed into the artifice of separation.’”⁴³⁷ That is to say, even the ‘plain’ discourses of the *Rabāb-nāma* are also figural in nature—they can describe, but not access, the extra-linguistic realm of God. The artifice of separation represents, of course, the greater literary forms which structure the figures themselves; in relation to a transcendent Reality, all language falls short of the mark, and hence all languages occupy equally displaced vantage points.

This displacement of established and nascent literary languages finds its most cogent articulation in the monumental *Garīb-nāme*, or *Book of the Stranger* (or *Book of the Strange*), written in Turkish by ‘Āşık Paşa. As I noted in chapter two, while ‘Āşık Paşa encoded his massive *maṣnavī* in a ‘Persian’ meter, he did so in order to competitively enter into an Islamic literary space with a widely recognizable literary form. Despite this, with the exception of a few tireless scholars such as Kemal Yavus, ‘Āşık Paşa and other early authors of Oghuz Turkish have often been dismissed as

unrepresentative of a “native” or authentic Turkish literature, since these authors attempted to write in a supposedly Arabo-Persian “manner and mode.”⁴³⁸ Yet ‘Āṣīk Paşa clearly did not conceptualize his own literary endeavor as merely derivative of Arabic and Persian literary forms, figures, and discourses. Instead, like Rūmī and Soltān Valad, ‘Āṣīk Paşa focused on the displacement of all literary languages in relation to a higher Signified, which again is represented through the figure of the gharīb.

It was not a foregone conclusion that Turkish could be a literary language in Rūm at the time of ‘Āṣīk Paşa’s writing. As Sara Nur Yıldız has argued, the Saljūq court historian Ebn Bībī attempted to delegitimize the Karamanid rebellion only decades earlier for trying to replace Persian with Turkish as the the language of “the imperial council, the inner and outer courts, the assembly, and the public square.”⁴³⁹ In contradistinction to the Karamanid rebellion, ‘Āṣīk Paşa’s strategy was to utilize “the full spectrum of expressive qualities of the superposed cosmopolitan code,”⁴⁴⁰ as Pollock theorized about ‘vernaculars’ in general, and consequently this strategy represents an altogether different scale of appropriation than we saw in the case of Rūmī. ‘Āṣīk Paşa needed to show that literary Turkish could work alongside and even in concert with the cosmopolitan language of Islam, Classical Arabic, and to a lesser extent, Persian.

Hence, while ‘Āṣīk Paşa defends his endeavor by structuring the ten sections of the *Garīb-nāme* to correspond with sections of the Qur’ān, I argued that he did so to draw

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁴³⁸ As I have shown, the most pejorative term to characterize authors like ‘Āṣīk Paşa is *taqlīd*; a term which Paul Losensky notes as implying a form of reductive, blind mimicry. (Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 108.) While there are many other terms in classical Arabo-Persian literary theory which describe more dynamic and active kinds of literary appropriation which we will later examine, ‘Āṣīk Paşa uses none of these concepts to theorize his own literary production.

⁴³⁹ Sara Nur Yıldız, “Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Saljūq Anatolia: The Politics of Conquest and History Writing, 1243-1282” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2006), 46.

⁴⁴⁰ Pollock, *The Language of Gods*, 322.

from the legitimacy of canonical scripture before subtly reiterating a similar position as held by Rūmī and Soltān Valad: the equally displaced, de-privileged nature of language itself in revealing higher spiritual secrets, or “meaning.” ‘Āşık Paşa conceptualized “meaning” not as placed, but rather as a journey towards God, who resides in non-place—therefore, he understands “meaning” as a successive series of “stage-posts [menzili]” along the road towards union with God. When ‘Āşık Paşa suggests that “Turk and Tajik ought to be companions [*yoldaş*],” he’s literally saying they ought to both be understood as equal partners on the road [*yol*] to “meaning,” which is not locatable either geographically or linguistically.

This argument builds towards more explicit statements about Language in general, but the implication here is that ‘Āşık Paşa is addressing the multilateral relationship between different literary languages specifically. “Do not assume that higher meanings are in one language,” he notes,⁴⁴¹ stating elsewhere that “there are higher meanings in every tongue for knowing; God is possible to find on every path.”⁴⁴² Turkish qualifies as a literary language simply because “in every language there are words that [tell of] higher secrets; the [outer] surface of [these] higher meanings is not hidden from sight.”⁴⁴³ Along the same vein, no language is capable of unveiling the entirety of any spiritual secret, because “no one is able to put a seal [*khatm*] on meaning.” The implication again, of course, is that while literary Turkish might vie with Classical Arabic and Persian, no literary language can claim a monopoly on meaning, not even the language spoken by the seal of the prophets himself.

⁴⁴¹ ‘Āşık Paşa, *Garīb-Nâme: Tıpkıbasım, Karşılaştırmalı Metin ve Aktarma*, ed. Kemal Yavuz, vol. 4 (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2000), 956.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 956.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 956.

Paradoxically, while ‘Āşık Paşa asserted that each language has its own vocabulary for unveiling Truth, the primary figure of the *Garīb-nāme* was not, strictly speaking, a Turkish word in origin (but then, nor was the gharīb entirely ‘native’ to any of the languages of the vernacular millennium). Instead, ‘Āşık Paşa notes plainly that “this book was named the *Garīb-nāme* because all of these aforementioned higher secrets are garīb in the Turkish language.”⁴⁴⁴ To a limited extent, ‘Āşık Paşa’s use of the figure of the gharīb is similar to Dante Alighieri’s defense of the vernacular, *De vulgari eloquentia*, which he wrote in the cosmopolitan language of Latin instead of Italian. In this case, ‘Āşık Paşa chose to mobilize a figure that was explicitly recognizable in both of the cosmopolitan languages of Islam in order to defend his own literary endeavor, while at the same time introducing the gharīb to Turkish-speakers as an argument for the cultivation of their own literary language. In addition, the figure of the gharīb was already linked, lexically and conceptually, to similar attempts by Rūmī and Solţān Valad to redistribute not only the right to make meaning in other literary languages, but even the right to combine different literary works and mediums that were both sacred and profane, esoteric and popular.

Whether we view the ‘gharīb’ from ‘Āşık Paşa’s perspective as coming from a realm beyond language itself, or as mediated through Arabic and Persian literature, the gharīb still belongs to an outside realm (a particular practice of Islam) which ‘Āşık Paşa was attempting to introduce to his Turkish-speaking audiences. As ‘Āşık Paşa says himself, that realm had never before entered into the Turkish language, and therefore was

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 924.

necessarily ‘strange’ or a ‘stranger’ there.⁴⁴⁵ His purpose, as with all of the other authors we have investigated, was therefore highly practical in theorizing all language as essentially open, albeit in different ways, to the entrance of what is “non-native” or “strange” from other languages as well as from a higher and extra-linguistic realm. In essence, his entire attempt to configure Turkish as a competitive literary language was meant to cultivate a community of Turkish-speakers around a particular spiritual orientation—a single “gharīb” within Soltān Valad’s multilingual covenant.

It is the Armenian mobilization(s) of the gharīb, however, that raises the most provocative and intriguing questions about the lateral connections between literary languages in Rūm. The Armenian case also raises some important differences from the configuration of the gharīb in Persian and Turkish. Most obviously, Armenian authors, even authors of a more colloquial Armenian tongue, were not trying to enter competitively into a greater Islamic literary space. Nor do these authors explicitly conceptualize the relationships between Rūm’s many literary languages—or simply languages in general—in such overt terms, specifically where and when the figure of the gharīb is concerned. And yet, as I have labored to show in the aforementioned Persian and Turkish cases, even the most ‘theoretical’ dimension of the gharīb as disrupting the hierarchy of established literary languages was ultimately motivated by stunningly simple, even quotidian, social objectives. More often than not, these concerns boiled down to the problem of communicating effectively with one’s interpretive community—or if we paraphrase Pollock here, how these authors, by choosing a literary language, were actually choosing and constituting such communities. Before delving into the

⁴⁴⁵ In his own words, he lamented that “many of the people have much unmet need for the comprehension of higher meanings,” for the simple reason that many Turkish speakers could not

Armenian case, we ought to briefly summarize and define those strategies which I outline above.

Rūmī, for instance, wanted to reinterpret other *maṣnavīs* in Persian alongside new exegeses of the Qur’ān and ḥadīth, but above all he wanted to communicate with the “people of Rūm” in ways that were already accessible, since even his own followers could not interpret the “strange” works of ‘Atṭār and Sanā’ī on their own. Hence, Rūmī folded together the textual and linguistic matrices of canonical scripture with more contemporary literary forms and figures in a new interpretation of multiple sources. Local members of his community as well as visitors from afar frequently challenged him to defend his own literary activity, which he did in part by restructuring the right of any language or literary form to have a monopoly on “meaning” or on appropriating previous works for new purposes. Solṭān Valad and ‘Āşık Paşa likewise pursued a similar goal of trying to foster a particular community, whether they understood that community as a multilingual collective of ‘strangers’ who hailed from elsewhere or in more monolingual terms as a group of Turkish-speakers who needed to accept the entrance of ‘strange’ meanings from other linguistic and cultural spheres (or, conversely, from a realm beyond language and culture, which in praxis really meant a refusal to privilege any language as having a monopoly on literary and cultural production).

In either case, the manner of forming new literary communities through acts of linguistic and literary appropriation were strikingly similar. At the risk of oversimplification, each of these authors relied on at least two basic communicative strategies, which, taken in tandem, amount to what I define here as a *practice of revoicing*. As I have argued repeatedly, the first of these strategies was to communicate in

understand the cosmopolitan languages of Islam. ‘Āşık Paşa, *Garīb-Nâme*, vol. 1, 6.

terms that audiences could understand, either by adopting (or adapting) a particular literary language, as in the case of Solṭān Valad and ‘Āṣīk Paşa, or by composing through musical forms or literary figures which were to a certain extent familiar, even popular, with one’s heterogeneous community, especially as in the case of Rūmī. The second strategy was in some ways the opposite of the first, as these authors also labored to introduce knowledge from ‘elsewhere,’ sometimes conceived as ‘strange,’ into those communities through various acts of literary reinterpretation and appropriation. The successful implementation of both strategies had high stakes, as these authors strived to reconfigure existing communities around new social and spiritual orientations in lasting ways. While one strategy pushed towards the familiar and comprehensible, the other pulled towards the foreign and strange. Within this dynamic of familiar and ‘foreign’ literary push-and-pull, new social and religious communities were either created, or in Pollock’s formulation, provided with “a more self-conscious voice.”⁴⁴⁶

This practice of revoicing other literary forms and figures through new hermeneutic frameworks was also pursued by a variety of Armenian poets in the ‘common’ tongue. In fact, Armenians were already part of this greater culture of literary and musical appropriation and reinterpretation even before Middle Armenian became more common as a written language for poetry. For instance, as noted in chapter three, while catholicos Nersēs Shnorhali rewrote the lyrics of a pagan hymn to the sun, he appropriated the melody to compose a new hymn to Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. Other figures such as Kostandin Erznkats‘i, who had considerably less formal learning in an academic setting, composed ‘vernacular’ poetry in the “voice [*dzayn*]” of Ferdowsī’s *Shāh-nāma*, not only appropriating a truncated form of the motaqāreb meter, but also

⁴⁴⁶ Pollock, “India in the Vernacular Millennium,” 42.

weaving together elements of the *Shāh-nāma* into a Christian hermeneutic framework, as Theo van Lint has discovered. The list goes on, from multiple appropriations of the rose and nightingale [*bulbul*], reinterpreted as figures for Christ and Gabriel, to the wholesale lifting of passages from other Persian poets, such as in Frik's appropriation of a Persian quatrain by Khāqānī, which he likewise reinterpreted through a Christian lens. Again, as I argued extensively in chapter three, Armenian poets and religious figures, particularly those who composed in the 'common' tongue, were highly sensitive to how different Armenian communities were in some ways consumers of, and perhaps even participants in, 'other' literary cultures ('other' from the perspective of the Classical Armenian literary corpus).

Hence, even if Armenian authors were not trying to enter within an "Islamic" literary space as a competitor, they were in a broad sense competing with that space from the outside, perhaps in some cases vying for potentially overlapping audiences. Armenian authors accomplished this in part by incorporating and reinterpreting popular Persianate and Turkish literary forms and figures into Armenian letters—figuratively speaking, bringing the *gharīb* into their midst. Authoritative clergymen in the Armenian church likewise pursued this practice for a pragmatic reason, as they wanted to communicate with their flock directly, in an easily accessible language, through literary conventions which were already familiar to Armenians living alongside Persians and Turks, although alien to the previous modes of literary production characterized by Classical Armenian. A primary goal of these clergymen was to promulgate Christian teachings, and therefore preserve the confessional integrity of the Armenian faithful within diversely multilingual, multiethnic, and even multi-religious communities which reflected the heterogeneous

social and linguistic landscape of Rūm. Even though these Armenian authors did not theorize their own literary production in the same terms as did various Şūfī figures, in praxis the literary strategies they pursued were highly similar, if not identical, in character. ‘Āşık Paşa’s declaration of “no one is able to put a seal on meaning” could just as easily apply to the Armenian authors who redirected semiotic clusters of signification from Persian and Turkish letters, to point towards a *Christian* extra-linguistic ‘beyond,’ underpinned by a similar Neoplatonic understanding.

At the same time, the figure of the Armenian gharīb speaks not just to heterogeneously mixed societies, but specifically to the plight of the émigré, migrant, and exile, which differs in important ways from the other literary examples we have observed. Most notably, the Armenian poems on gharībs are firmly about living within dispersed communities—or even beyond those communities as an isolated individual—in this world. However, while the relationship between the Armenian ‘gharībs’ and specific, individual literary works in Persian or Turkish is not apparent, the Armenian gharīb still speaks to a complicated relationship with multiple other literary languages, as I have argued. For one, the authors of the earliest poems which featured gharībs, such as Yovhannēs Erznkats‘i and Frik, were certainly multilingual and were familiar with Persian literature, which they occasionally appropriated for similar reasons. More tellingly, the popular ‘vernacular’ romance, the *History of the Youth Farman*, not only featured a ‘gharīb’ as its protagonist and contained one of the earliest examples of a song about gharībs in the Armenian language, but as James Russell has suggested, could have been paraphrased from an oral Persian romance. Certainly, there is evidence to believe this is the case, as the romance takes place in Khorāsān, all the characters have Persian

names whose variants are extant in the *Shāh-nāma*, the characters recite—literally, give voice [*dzayn*] to—Persianate melodies and poetry within the romance, and the romance is largely devoid of any Christian cosmology or theology, just as it is devoid of any references to Armenians.⁴⁴⁷

In contradistinction, bishop Mkrtych' Naghash and Aṛak'el Baghishets'i's articulations of the Armenian gharīb, while sharing extremely similar wording and structure with the gharīb's song in the *History of the Youth Farman*, bring the figure of the stranger into an overtly Christian framework, and in so doing, bring the 'outside' within the walls of the Armenian church, whether that outside represents a popular 'Armenian' understanding of gharībs, an 'Islamic' articulation of gharībs, an understanding of exile culled from Biblical models, or the combination of many of these within a new literary voice. In any of these cases, such acts of revoicing literary forms and figures ultimately would achieve the same end: to console gharībs by reminding them that God and the Virgin Mary are watching over them, but also to underscore the theme

⁴⁴⁷ As I argued in chapter three, at the very least, the romance indicates that there existed a popular Armenian conception of the 'gharīb' within a culture of reciting songs about exile to address to one's own immediate circumstances, as does the protagonist in the tale. The romance also indicates that these songs about the gharīb could lack any overt or underlying relationship with Christianity. Finally, at the very least, the romance indicates that this popular understanding of gharībs could exist as part of a culture which was partly beyond monastic or academic institutions, where Classical Armenian was the literary paradigm. This much can be empirically proven. However, the linguistic and cultural orientation of the romance, itself saturated not only with a wide variety of loan-words and concepts, including the 'gharīb,' gives serious weight to the hypothesis that the romance was configured out of a more complicated relationship at least with Persian romances, if not Greek as well.

Certainly, as I argued in chapter two, there are oral songs about the gharīb in Persian which we know existed in Anatolia, but these are lost to us today; a notable example is Rūmī's song, the "gharīb's rebec," which he played on the rabāb in order to defend the use of musical instruments in religious practice. Given that Armenian songs about gharībs began to proliferate at the end of the 14th and beginning of the 15th century, when Armenians, Persians, and Turks were expelled from their homes and circulated with one another in foreign lands, there is historical evidence to suppose the probability of an overlapping oral/literary culture developing about exiled gharībs during at least during this period, if not before. The problem of demographic upheaval had been ongoing, we ought to remember, at least from the initial invasions of the Mongols in the 13th century. If such an oral culture existed, however, by definition it would be irrecoverable except in the few instances we have of specific individuals entering into that culture

of the unity of all Christians, whether they lived in dispersion or not. Mkr̄tich‘ Naghash states so himself when he provocatively declares:

—We are all gharibs, brothers, no one truly has a homeland [*hayreni*],
We are all going equally, for that life is our homeland.
Obtain a means for yourself here, that your soul doesn’t suffer there,
Make the saints your brothers and the angels your loved ones.⁴⁴⁸

Therefore, although the Armenian gharīb often speaks to a social condition that is lacking in the Persian and Turkish examples, this particular reformulation of what it means to be a true gharīb was not based on a geographical position alone. Rather, it was based upon a spiritual orientation, much in the same vein as articulated by Rūmī and Yūnus Emre, who viewed detachment from the world and a longing for reunion with God to be the hallmarks of a true gharīb. Mkr̄tich‘ Naghash’s notion that “no one truly has a homeland,” and that the next “life is our homeland” is also evocative of Solṭān Valad’s *Rabāb-nāma*, wherein gharībs are those constituents of a rabāb, or spiritual covenant, who have been separated from their true homeland [*vaṭan*]. In each case, separation from one’s earthly homeland serves as an easily comprehensible analog for the pain and suffering true gharībs feel in their separation from God, their heavenly homeland. In the Armenian example specifically, the covenant which binds together disparate gharībs is of course not a Ṣūfī articulation of Islam, but rather a thoroughly Christian ‘rabāb.’ The success in establishing and/or sustaining a lasting covenant relied on being able to communicate these messages in a highly resonant, easily accessible manner.

through the act of rewriting: the push and pull of foreign and familiar, which allowed those authors to shape such a culture and the communities which gave it voice.

In this sense, Mkr̄tich‘ Naghash, Arak‘el Baghishets‘i, and their contemporaries sought a slightly different engagement with strange literary figures and forms: figuratively speaking, they brought the gharīb—the literary forms and figures from a variety of adjacent literary languages in Rūm, *including* Middle Armenian—into the fold of the Armenian church, not to introduce those figures to lay Armenian communities, but arguably because those communities were already engaging with different poetics that were outside of the corpus of Classical Armenian literature. To phrase it somewhat differently, what was revoiced in Armenian was not often a discrete work, but rather the *reception* of intersecting poetic conventions from other literary languages within different Armenian communities: cosmopolitan literary codes which, in some cases, were as geographically displaced as the peoples who gave them voice.

This leads us back to the original question of assessing the practice of revoicing across different scales of appropriation, whether those appropriations occur between discrete authors, or in relation to any supposedly ‘cosmopolitan’ literary code. As opposed to secondary translation, revoicing does not always discriminate between appropriation of a single work, multiple works, and more generalized literary ‘codes,’ but frequently presumes that more than one appropriation and reinterpretation are in play. As we have seen in the case of Rūmī’s *Maṣnavī*, he clearly revoiced scripture, such as the Qur’ān and ḥadīth, in a poetic meter, but he also appropriated and reinterpreted the Persian didactic maṣnavīs of ‘Aṭṭār and Sanā’ī alongside more generalized and popular, even vulgar, literary topoi and tropes, all of which he communicated in a resonant manner to his audience through the use of musical instruments and performative recitation. Yet

⁴⁴⁸ Mkr̄tich‘ Naghash, *Mkr̄tich‘ Naghash*, ed. E. Khondkaryan, (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR GA Hratarakch‘ut‘yun, 1965), 167.

whereas specific European authors configured the ascendancy of the *vernacular* through secondary translation, what I have termed the practice of revoicing does not necessarily have to displace any source text through inventio. Rather, the cumulative practice of revoicing the literary figures and forms of others, either within a single language or beyond it, compounds the ‘*cosmopolitan*’ dimension of a given literary code over time; in fact, it is arguably this endlessly recurring act of appropriation and reinterpretation of previous literary ‘utterances,’ which creates such literary ‘codes,’ or traditions, at all.⁴⁴⁹ This is true whether the appropriation is of a single literary work, many literary works, or the literary conventions which are generated by the corpus of literature in a single language.

When revoicing occurs across literary languages, the practice not only is a product of the “multiplicity of links to adjacent languages,” but in some ways, helps to create those adjacent literary links in the first place. Just like the peregrinus, which becomes “foreign” either when entering Roman territory or when Romans entered the territory of peregrini, a literary code becomes cosmopolitan primarily through acts of appropriation and reinterpretation. To exist as such, a cosmopolitan literary code must simultaneously take up residence in a particular time and place while evoking a multiplicity of adjacent entrances elsewhere, recalling the other speakers and societies which not only make possible the entrance of a literary code into our here, our now, but sometimes help to define ‘our’ literature as such (much like the *gharīb* itself). The ability of literary languages to make lateral recourse to multiple ‘outsides’ is what equips any

⁴⁴⁹ Particularly in classical Arabo-Persian literary theory, the notion of cumulative appropriation as one of the driving forces of premodern literary production was a relatively uncontroversial notion. As Paul Losensky notes in his marvelous *Welcoming Fighani*, the Imam ‘Alī reportedly declared that “if speech were not repeatable, it would have been exhausted.” See Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 101.

cosmopolitan literary code with its communicative currency and efficacy, what makes those codes ‘cosmopolitan’ to begin with.

In this sense, a cosmopolitan literary code is similar to Mallette’s definition of a true cosmopolitan language, which she argues “is no one’s mother tongue, it is a mistress tongue: a language that the aspiring writer must court and woo in order to write his way into the pages of history.”⁴⁵⁰ According to Mallette, the cosmopolitan language is both “transhistorical and transregional—it is spoken throughout a vast expanse of space and time—and yet possesses true sovereignty nowhere.”⁴⁵¹ Ultimately, the cosmopolitan language “coexists with other languages, both spoken and written,” wherever it spreads, not necessarily by subordinating localized mother tongues, but also by “working in concert and coordinating with them.”⁴⁵² Broadly speaking, then, any cosmopolitan literary code that comes to be seen as ‘native’ and ‘original’ to the cosmopolitan language was configured by a wide variety of different peoples. These peoples may have engaged in a kind of literary dialog with one another across space and time, but they also spoke different mother tongues. Just as true cosmopolitan languages are not native to any people, I would similarly assert that cosmopolitan literary codes were configured through multiple engagements with different peoples and different languages over time: compounded acts of appropriation which are native to no single language, even if that language is cosmopolitan in the sense that Mallette defines it.

While Pollock articulates a more cooperative and co-constitutional relationship between the ‘vernacular’ languages of South Asia and the cosmopolitan language of Sanskrit in his magisterial work, *The Language of Gods in the World of Men*, he also

⁴⁵⁰ Mallette, “The Metropolis and Its Languages,” 32.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

views the relationship between the established cosmopolitan literary code and more nascent literary languages as a hierarchical, superposed one. Pollock argues that:

The alternative world that vernacular literature creates becomes an alternative only given the presence of a “superposed” or dominant cultural formation of a transregional sort: Greek over Latin, Latin over French, Chinese over Vietnamese, Sanskrit over Javanese. And it becomes a world—a self adequate literary culture according to the prevailing scale of norms—only by appropriating the signs of superposition in everything from lexicon and metric to rhetoric, genre, and aesthetic.⁴⁵³

In contradistinction, I have tried to show how there were many literary languages in Rūm at this period in time which intersected with one another and responded to one another differently and sometimes unequally, and this included both the ‘cosmopolitan’ or ‘universal’ languages as Pollock and Mallette define them, as well as other languages which were not cosmopolitan or universal in the same way, but still were not necessarily bounded by a single territory, polity, or ethnicity, and in some cases actually were mother tongues. Rather than figure the relationship between these literatures as superposed, I instead have attempted to show how different authors considered their own relationships to one another, their heterogeneous audiences, and the process of meaning-making itself in more multilateral terms.

Finally, I have attempted to show how the figure of the gharīb is both synecdoche of different literary ‘codes’ as well as a site where the signifying capabilities of those codes could be negotiated. I have suggested that these ongoing negotiations over signification, which I have termed a practice of revoicing, necessarily are textured with

⁴⁵² Ibid., 32.

multiple outsides, what is not us, even in the attempt to create what is indigenous to any given literary tradition. Just as redefinition presupposes a definition, the practice of revoicing likewise presupposes a ‘voice’ (really, a prior act of revoicing) which constitutes ‘our’ poetics elsewhere, making our particular manipulations of that poetics a possibility. Revoicing can serve to oppose or erase a previous voice, as in the case of the Armenian gharīb, or to work in concert with a previous voice, as in the case of the Persian and Turkish articulations of the gharīb. However, we ought to keep in mind in all of these cases, we’re not looking at one monolithic cosmopolitan literary code which is then “superposed” upon different vernacular literatures, but rather *codes*, multilaterally shifting literary conventions culled from popular modes of literary production in Armenian or Turkish, preexisting relationships with other literary languages, such as Persian, Classical Arabic, Classical Armenian, and Greek, as well the various oral and musical traditions which are necessarily lost to us today. Like many of the authors who, in some cases, controversially revoiced different literary and non-literary manners of communication, we would also be served by considering the relationships between these literary languages—relationships foregrounded by acts of appropriation—to be more open and multilateral in relationship to different ‘outsides’ than closed and hierarchical.

Identifying an act of revoicing, where and when such a delineation would be appropriate, obviously does not recover all of these ‘sources,’ but I would stress here that this practice of literary appropriation and reinterpretation does not focus on recovery, but rather a compounded process of literary appropriation and cosmopolitan agglutination; a process which doesn’t spread unidirectionally from one literary language to another, but

⁴⁵³ Sheldon Pollock, "India in the Vernacular Millennium: Literary Culture and Polity, 1000-1500." *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998): 46.

instead speaks to multiple attachments and engagements between communities and other literary languages. The concept of revoicing necessarily places emphasis on the agency of particular authors and communities in altering how different cosmopolitan codes and literary works, folded together, create new chains of meaning and point towards different constellations of signifieds. This is partly what distinguishes revoicing from other acts of literary appropriation, including the practices of translation or secondary translation. Unlike the figure of Griselda, the *gharīb* speaks not necessarily to translation, as the signifier in this case remains relatively stable across the languages it performatively enters, going “native” while still remaining, to a certain extent, cosmopolitan and therefore on the outside. Rather, revoicing brings the *signified* into an entirely new orientation.

Because no one can put a seal on meaning, the practice of revoicing is an assertion, whether openly acknowledged or not, that signifying code and signified meaning are not inexorably coupled together, but rather, like literary authority itself, are more fluidly negotiated across intersecting peoples and places. Hence, while the method of appropriation might be highly similar, revoicing in each of these cases inevitably, sometimes intentionally, introduces varying degrees of difference. Not all of these *gharībs* are the same or even coequal, but that does not mean the multiple literary ‘codes’ and conventions of which the *gharīb* is part do not intersect, and even draw from one another, for both theoretical and pragmatic ends. As Rūmī, Solṭān Valad, and ‘Āşık Paşa all argued, anyone can have an equal stake in directing particular communities towards ‘meaning.’

Conclusion: Dialog and Voice

In the previous section, I defined the practice of revoicing most simply as a literary strategy which encompassed an effort to communicate with particular audiences in a highly accessible and even familiar manner. At the same time, this strategy attempts to introduce literary conventions, and sometimes even epistemes, from ‘elsewhere’ through acts of literary appropriation and reinterpretation which balance multiple engagements between individual works and more cosmopolitan literary codes. In the case of Rūm during this period, the practice of revoicing was mobilized in order to shape the spiritual and social orientation of particular communities. Furthermore, I suggested that to revoice is not to borrow from a superposed cosmopolitan literary code as much as it is to swing different ‘codes’ into a new orbit of meaning-making.

I also posited that cosmopolitan literary codes themselves—even the conventions of *any* literary tradition—are constructed through compounded acts of appropriation and adaptation over time. Instead of being necessarily monolithic and ‘superposed’ over other literary languages, cosmopolitan literary codes are comprised of and compromised by different engagements with other peoples and languages over the *longue durée*, which as Mallette has argued, also characterizes the nature of cosmopolitan literary languages. Specifically in the case of literary production in Rūm, many authors “revoiced” different literary codes by dynamically remapping the relationships between literary languages in relation to “meaning,” to which anyone can make a lateral claim. These authors made

“meaning” — what the cosmopolitan literary code pointed towards — as important as the code itself, in essence placing emphasis on their own acts of appropriation, figured, either in theory or in praxis, as the entrance of the gharīb. The gharīb succeeds as a figure in this case, as I have repeatedly posited, because it performs and enacts the entrance of a constellation of literary conventions into a particular literary language, which assists in the creation of that language *as* literary.

I have also argued throughout this dissertation that the figure of the gharīb, which enters both society, language, and literature, also represents the purposeful attempt to configure both a literary language and a community in tandem. While easily comprehensible literary figures, forms, and languages allowed these authors to communicate directly with different audiences, it was ultimately through acts of appropriation and reinterpretation, or a practice of revoicing, that they they were able to swing those communities into alternative social and spiritual orbits, which was their ultimate goal. According to Rūmī’s interpretation of the infamous ḥadīth, true gharībs in Islam not only enter a community, but in fact, configure and constitute that community. Like the Prophet, the immortal saint Kheẓr, Shams-al-Dīn Tabrīzī, or Rūmī himself, the gharīb is a guide who brings his followers into new spiritual orientation, realigned with alternative communal and social attachments. In fact, this was the stated intention of the *Garīb-nāme*, which performatively entered into Turkish communities as something ‘strange,’ transferring the original authority of Islam to a new umma in the process (in fact, creating that umma). In the Armenian case, the gharīb became a potent figure for representing the dispersed Armenian people while simultaneously asserting a common unity *in* dispersion, marked along confessional lines.

‘Revoicing’ also presumes that appropriations and reinterpretations of a single literary work are embedded in larger processes, or at least larger intentions, such as the aim to educate Armenian-speaking audiences about Christianity through widely popular, and hence cosmopolitan, literary forms and figures. In the Armenian case specifically, while there is no evidence to suggest that these acts of ‘revoicing’ were part of a centrally organized, sustained movement of any kind, the fact that different authors in different regions likewise pursued a similar strategy of literary appropriation and reinterpretation speaks to the clear need to produce easily accessible literature by drawing on literary models which were alien to the corpus of Classical Armenian poetry. Hence, I have suggested that this phenomenon of appropriation was not limited to Arabo-Persian literary production. Rather, Armenians were also part of very similar cultures of literary appropriation and interpretation as we can see occurring in Turkish literature and Persian literature within this shared geographical region during this period.

Therefore, the practice of revoicing served a highly pragmatic purpose: to shape the spiritual and social orientation of different communities in lasting ways. Likewise, my own aim throughout this dissertation has been similarly pragmatic. Above all, I have tried to show how these authors were fundamentally invested in the literary cultures of ‘others,’ and that these acts of appropriation and reinterpretation were a driving, and not superficial, force of literary production and societal configuration in Rūm during this period. Of course, to a certain extent, this is also an abstraction: despite more recent nationalist projects of asserting the ‘detachment’ or ‘uniqueness’ of these literatures from one another, in reality, these different literatures and literary languages cannot be so neatly disarticulated. The authors and communities I have examined often embodied

multiple literacies, and as I argued in the previous section, did not consider the literary figures and forms which constituted a particular poetic ‘voice’ to be the domain of any single language. Rather, like the figure of the *gharīb* itself, these ‘voices’ could be articulated across social strata, religious communities, and a multiplicity of literary languages, in part because they developed *in relation* to one another within this shared geographic space.

Mikhail Bakhtin made a similar point quite succinctly when he argued that speech acts do not exist in an abstract or impersonal vacuum; they are grounded in specific utterances, charged with the presence of other speakers and listeners. For Bakhtin, every act of composition is an active response, embedded in these larger dialogs, for the simple reason that the “word in language is half someone else’s”:

It becomes “one’s own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one’s own.⁴⁵⁴

For Bakhtin, speech itself is a dialogic act, evoking responses to other utterances, discourses, classes, and ideologies. What I propose here is that revoicing, in a broad sense, remaps Bakhtinian heteroglossia, based on refracted varieties of speech-acts within one single language, onto a socially heterogeneous and fundamentally multilingual literary landscape. The concept of revoicing demands a closer look not only at how

particular literary languages are implicated in the speech and writing of ‘others,’ but furthermore makes clear that ‘interconnections’ between literary languages are not utopian or necessarily harmonious, but rather can be populated by radically divergent intentions. Revoicing also calls attention to the fact that such ‘interconnections,’ where and when they can be said to exist, are not simply naturally occurring, but come into being as the result of particular choices, both conscious and unconscious, on the part of an author or society: to use this literary language, ‘code,’ style, even *word*, and not that one.

Of course, while Bakhtin obviously was writing in Russian, one word *for* ‘word’ in Latin is *vox*, which also means ‘voice.’ Similarly, in this dissertation, I have argued that the *voice* in literary language is half someone else’s: all acts of literary revoicing recall other ‘voices,’ elsewhere. In the particular case of Rūm, if the gharīb is half someone else’s, then to a certain extent, so are the greater literary languages in which the gharīb is embedded. This is what it means to revoice. The stranger’s voice speaks what is native. It is our voice, speaking us.

⁴⁵⁴ Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 293-4.

Epilogue

Following Strangers Elsewhere

Do not let the word invariably reside on its native soil—such residence dishonours it. Let it avoid its natural location, travel about elsewhere, and take up a pleasant abode on the estate of another. There let it stay as a novel guest, and give pleasure by its very strangeness. If you provide this remedy, you will give to the word's face a new youth.⁴⁵⁵

—Geoffrey of Vinsauf (fl. 13th century)

We began with the stranger and the crane: a single figure to trace across literatures, and a macro-optic to contextualize this process of literary ‘appropriation’ and ‘exchange’ within a broader region.

But now the season has changed, and we find our crane has continued along its migratory route. We might follow the crane forwards in time, or backwards in time. Wherever we go, we find another *gharīb* calling out to us in a sad and stirring voice. Wherever this voice attracts our ear, we hear other echoes and accents from the landscape below.

Fly to Isfahan, the seat of the Safavid Empire. The borderland Armenians, who lived on the periphery of the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, have been forcibly resettled nearby in New Julfa at the turn of the 17th century. One minstrel of this community, a certain Hart'un Oghli (born circa 1760), sits with his companions and sings that the world is *ghurbat*, exile, in which men are gharibs. This life of the gharib is unkind, Hart'un sighs: even should the gharib ascend "upwards like lanterns in the majlis," he would still be alone.⁴⁵⁶

Near Isfahan, other voices shape the gharīb for different ends. Another poem, this time in Persian, rises sweetly from the lips of Šā'eb Tabrīzī (d. 1676), who spent the early part of his career in Mughal India before returning to Isfahan. "Beware placing your foot thoughtlessly in the gharīb place," Šā'eb cautions, warning that only those who are ready to forswear worldly attachment should attempt such a journey.⁴⁵⁷

If we turn back to the Caucasus, we spy a multilingual Armenian minstrel by the name of Sayat'-Nova (d. 1795) singing about his life as a gharib-bulbul, or wandering nightingale, at the court of the Georgian king, Irakli II.⁴⁵⁸ This afternoon, Sayat'-Nova sings in Armenian, but tomorrow he will sing in Turkish, and in Georgian, and in Persian.

Still, we move on.

Rising from the Georgian court, we hear Armenian and Turkish variants of a common story, 'Ashugh Gharib' or 'Aşık Garip,' resounding throughout the Caucasus. The tale concerns a young man from Tabriz who receives the gift of gab from

⁴⁵⁵ Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria Nova*, trans. Margaret F. Nims (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1967), 43.

⁴⁵⁶ *Hasmik Sahakyan, ed., Hay Ashughner XVII-XVIII D.D.* (Yerevan: Haykakan SSR GA Hratarakch'ut'yun, 1961), 237.

⁴⁵⁷ Šā'eb Tabrīzī, *Dīvān-e Šā'eb Tabrīzī*, ed. Moḥammad Qahramān, vol. 1 (Tehran: Sherkat-e Enteshārāt-e 'Elmī va Farhangī, 1985), 437.

Hızır/Khezr (in the Turkish variant) or St. Sargis (in the Armenian). Both the ‘Armenian’ and ‘Turkish’ Aşık Garip wander far from their homes in search of patronage, winning favor at foreign courts with their sweet voices.

We could press forward in time, all the way until the Armenian genocide of 1915, when the Young Turks sentenced a breathtaking number of Armenians to die while wandering as exiles in the desert. “Crane, whence do you come,” the young men sang together, communally trailing off, “I will die as a gharib.”⁴⁵⁹ Many of them do.

Veering west and forward in time, we find Turkish poets in Istanbul, 1941, fashioning a new poetics by drawing from the unadorned ‘vernacular’ speech of the people. Orhan Veli, Oktay Rifat, and Melih Cevdet name their movement *Garip*, seeking to revivify Turkish literature with new images which address the alienation of modern life. Despite *Garip*’s attempt to break radically from the Ottoman literary past, the movement reflects another moment some seven hundred years prior, when ‘Āşık Paşa configured his own literary language, breaking with ‘traditional’ Turkish syllabic meter to compose the *Garīb-nāme*, a new work which would be competitive with other poetics, elsewhere.

Each of these contexts adds a slightly different dimension to what the gharib can mean—both for the ‘authors’ who composed these songs and poems, as well as for the audiences which interpreted them. Even our early-modern song, ‘Crane,’ addresses the modern horrors of state formation and ethnic cleansing when merely voiced—not adapted!—in a different context. What we see, then, is not so much the ‘diffusion’ of a

⁴⁵⁸ See C. J. F. Dowsett, *Sayat’-Nova : An 18th-Century Troubadour: A Biographical and Literary Study* (Lovanii: Peeters, 1997), 382.

⁴⁵⁹ Grigoris Balakian, *Armenian Golgotha*, trans. Peter Balakian and Aris G. Sevag (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 229.

literary trope (which had already been ubiquitous in large parts of the world for almost a millennium), but rather an ongoing and dynamic negotiation over what the ‘stranger’ means, played out on an multilingual, pluralistic stage. Sometimes, that stage was embodied within the literacies of a single poet. At other times, that stage was the configuration of new socio-religious communities across an expansive geographic space.

The *gharīb* is a figure of rootlessness, of fluidity, of plurality, and therefore can help us think about what is non-native, or non-exclusive, about literary production in both the modern and premodern periods. In fact, if we follow our crane far, far back in time, the *gharīb* not only tells the story of a lone wanderer across languages, but also the story of literary language itself.

This becomes more clear by returning to Franz Rosenthal’s etymological analysis of the word ‘*gharīb*,’ which he suggested was connected to the general Semitic root, *gh-r-b* [alternatively ‘-r-b] meaning “to enter.” In the linguistic *longue durée*, the ‘*gharīb*’ was not necessarily ‘native’ even to Classical Arabic. Rather, the Semitic root of the *gharīb* can be traced back at least to Akkadian, one of the major cosmopolitan languages before the Common Era, and progenitor of both Hebrew and Arabic. Rosenthal notes that this root primarily describes the entrance of something alien into ‘our’ midst:

The standard Akkadian dictionaries list *errebu* (CAD)/*errēbu* (von Soden) as “newcomer, person accepted into the family, intruder” as well as the collective *errebtu* “refugees, immigrants.” The Akkadian usage suggests that the *gharīb* was originally not one who removed himself from his group and environment. He was primarily seen from, so to speak, the receiving end, that is, the group faced with persons attempting to enter it, who were usually not welcomed with open arms, and even less so as equals.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁶⁰ Franz Rosenthal, “The Stranger in Medieval Islam,” *Arabica* 44, no. 1 (1997): 38.

The etymology of the word implies that the gharīb is both “accepted into the family” and the “intruder” (even “usurper” in Old Akkadian)⁴⁶¹, becoming familiar while bearing an aura of the outside, whence the gharīb came. For the gharīb to exist at all, lexically or conceptually, it had to make this double move of nativization and foreignization—becoming native in one language or place while remaining the signifier for something that is not *us*, that is not placed. On a linguistic and literary level, that signifier in fact preforms what it represents, as it too has come from multiple other linguistic, geographic, and cultural realms. If we look at the gharīb with a wide lens across different literary languages and historical period, we find that the signifier points to all languages which the gharīb has entered: it is the act of this intrusion elsewhere, from someone else’s outside, that makes possible this entrance here, from our outside.

The gharīb’s vertiginous history of entering other languages is nearly as old as alphabetic writing itself. It can be traced back at least to some 2,500 years before the Common Era, as the concept of ‘errebū’ was already present at the dawn of the Akkadian language’s cosmopolitan ascendancy, entering into the Akkadian dialects of Babylonian in southern Mesopotamia and Assyrian in the north. When Aramaic began to displace Akkadian as the regional language in the first millennium B.C.E., the intruding Semitic root was there. It “entered” the Ugaritic language; it entered the Ge’ez language; it entered the Phoenician language, whose speakers traveled on seafaring ships and traded with other peoples across the Mediterranean world.

⁴⁶¹ Jeremy A. Black, A. R. George, and J. N. Postgate, *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 79.

All of these entrances gave rise to an equally perspectival vocabulary of place: Rosenthal notes that the Semitic root *ġ-r-b* (or its even more common spelling, *'-r-b*) is best known for describing the entrance of the sun into the earth, whence we get a variety of words for 'sunset' and 'evening,' but even more importantly, for concepts of 'West' in Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, Akkadian,⁴⁶² Ge'ez, and other languages. Numerous scholars have even controversially posited that the proper name "Europe" comes from this Semitic root *'-r-b*, as 'Europe' was the region where the sun entered the horizon for the Phoenician seafarers as they traveled towards their own West;⁴⁶³ that is, Greece and its adjacent territories. The root *'-r-b / ġ-r-b* doesn't only delineate places of entrance, but in some ways, helps to create the concepts for those 'regional worlds' which still exist today.

In contradistinction to Europe, the Phoenician place where the sun enters the earth, the Greek word 'Anatolia' [Ἀνατολή] means the 'East,' or the place where the sun rises. This dividing line of East / West still maps onto contemporary understandings of the globe, with half of Istanbul located in Europe on the West, and the other half residing

⁴⁶² *Ma'arāb, maghrib, megālē šimšā, erib šamši,* and *'arab,* respectively. See Rosenthal, "The Stranger in Medieval Islam," 38.

⁴⁶³ Michael Astour has put forth one of the most involved arguments for 'Europe' as derived from the Phoenician root *'rb* in his work, *Hellenosemitica*. Astour argues: "The name Eurôpê, taken in itself, is indeed a good Greek name: "wide-eyed" or "broad-faced." But this semantics does not explain how it happened that Eurôpê became the designation of the continent which still bears that name. Hesychios reports following [sic] significations of the word Eurôpê: *chôra tês dyseôs, ê skoteinê* "land of sunset, or dark one," and of *eurôpon: skoteinon* "dark." This excellently accounts for the name of Europe in its geographic sense. But such semantics of Eurôpê, *eurôpon* can in no way be derived from the Greek language. Only the old, many times abandoned and rejected hypothesis of this word's origin from the Semitic root *'rb* "to enter" or, speaking of the sun, "to set," (whence words for "evening" and "west"), and also "to be dark, black," can explain its semantics. Of course, one has to assume that this designation was first applied to Greece and neighboring continental territories by Phoenician seafarers, because it not only belongs to their language, but also corresponds to the viewpoint of comers from the East; and this is not the only case of the general name for a vast region being given by outsiders." Astour then presents a large body of phonetico-morphological and mythological evidence to support his claim. See Michael C. Astour, *Hellenosemitica; an Ethnic and Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean Greece* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 128-35.

in Asia in the East. Yet the origins of the gharīb stretch back so far into the mists of time that they predate many of the most fundamental and basic ways in which we figure the world today. It is impossible to think of the gharīb as truly “native” in any of the contemporary cosmopolitan or vernacular languages of the last thousand years, just as it is increasingly difficult to figure the exclusively “native” in the *longue durée* of history. What endures across time is that which has come not just from elsewhere, but *elsewheres*, textured with the harmonious and discordant cadences of other voices.

I would suggest that this represents the very quality of literary production itself, especially over long periods of time, but the gharīb in Rūm also reminds us that this quality rings true over *much shorter durations* as well, particularly in shared geographic spaces where audiences potentially overlap. The figure of the gharīb calls not for a closer evaluation of meetings between East and West, then, but rather for a reevaluation of the interconnected histories upon which similar dividing concepts are predicated—it asks us not only to refigure our own understandings of boundaries between peoples and literary languages, but to look at how premodern societies redrew those boundaries themselves.

Our crane rises again. Sadly, we must leave our gharīb behind.

But listen—can’t you hear the wind swelling in our wings, whispering the places we have not yet been?

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