

ŞAD KALIMAH

EARLY 16TH CENTURY

The Apothegms of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, with the metrical Persian paraphrase of Rashīd i Vatvāt¹

MEASUREMENTS, ETC. 24.0 × 15.0 cm.; the written surface measures c. 15.4 × 7.5 cm.; 3 lines of Arabic text, 2 lines in horizontal and 2 groups of 4 lines in oblique script of Persian text; 19 folios.

WRITING AND PAPER. The writing is particularly elegant *Nasta'liq*, within gold and blue rulings. The paper is semi-polished and rather thin.

BINDING. The outside of the eighteenth-century Turkish cover consists of boards covered with mottled ivory and green paper leaving visible the brown leather spine and edges; the inside is of pale orange paper.

DATE AND SCRIBE. According to the colophon, which reads مشقه العبد سلطان محمد علای مولانا و شیخنا بها الدین محمد سلمه الله تعالى این کلمات قصار حضرت شاه ولایت علیه السلام: 'This book is penned by the servant of Allah, Sultān Muḥammad Khandān, may Allah pardon his sins and overlook his shortcomings', the copyist of this manuscript was the famous scribe Sultān Muḥammad Khandān.²

ILLUMINATION. On fol. 2b is an '*unvān* illuminated in gold and blue and a little black and with foliage scrolls bearing red flowers, embodying in red ornamental the motto الله ولا سواه. Autograph notes on fol. 1b are contained within a decoration of irregular contour ornamented with blue foliage scrolls on a gold ground and a central motive and stylized edging in colour and black.

SEALS AND INSCRIPTIONS. The manuscript was formerly in the private library of Shāh 'Abbās I (985-1038 (1587-1629)) who, as indicated in the autograph note by this ruler on fol. 1b, dated 1009 (1600-1), called upon the famous scholar Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn al-Āmili to edit and correct these aphorisms. The note runs الحمد لله تعالى والملك له حضرت

علامی مولانا و شیخنا بها الدین محمد سلمه الله تعالى این کلمات قصار حضرت شاه ولایت علیه السلام خوب صحیح فرماید تا نسخه برای زیارت دائم از روی آن بنویسد انشا الله تعالى عباس صفوی ۱۰۹
'His erudite eminence, our master and guide Bahā al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Āmili... deigns to undertake the careful correction (for تصحیح read صحیح) of these brief sayings of his Eminence and supreme Holiness ('Alī), peace be upon him, in order that from his work a copy may be prepared (of the sayings, for me), to which I can constantly refer, by the grace of Allah, the All Highest! 'Abbās Ṣafavī, 1009.' Appended to this command is the scholar's reply هو الغنی چون نسخه تصحیح شده حاضر بود معاً شرف زیارت را نایل باد در صورتی که باز تصحیح این کتاب لازم است امر اعلی امتثال شود بهاء الدین محمد
'As an emended manuscript (of the sayings) lay ready to my hand, let it attain the honour of (your Majesty's) instant inspection. If (your Majesty should consider) indispensable the further emendation of this book, (your) august command shall be performed.'

A note on fol. 2 penned at Shiraz by a *cadi* who was spiritual adviser to a deceased hereditary prince vouches for the genuineness of the autograph notes of Shāh 'Abbās I and Bahā' al-Dīn. On fol. 2 are also the *ex-libris* of Muṣṭafā ibn al-Ḥājj Aḥmad and Sayyid Muḥammad Bisam (?) ibn Sayyid Shaikh 'Alī and the date 1228 (1813).

There are two seals of ownership on foll. 1 and 1b and five on fol. 2.

On fol. 1 Faṭḥ 'Alī Shāh Qājār (reigned 1212-1250 = 1797-1834) has written مرحوم شاه عباس خشنویس [sic] بوده از درجه خط بخوبی معلوم میشود مرحوم شیخ هم اسم خود را خیلی قشنگ نوشته معلوم است اگر خودشان دارای هنر نبودند این همه تشویق از هنرمندان نمیکردند در این مطلب همین صفحه و خطشان سند است بد کاغذیست فتحعلی قاجار

[E. B. and A. J. A.]