Appendix 4
Colophon, Notations and Seal of the *Razmnāmah* in the India Office Collection (IO Islamic 762)

This manuscript was catalogued by Hermann Ethé and published in his *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts* in 1903.¹ It has not been examined otherwise as far as we are aware. Some notes on the text and illustrations are published here to give preliminary insight the ownership trail of the available copies and the nature of *Razmnāmah* readership after the sixteenth century.

The manuscript has Abū al-Faz̤l's *Preface* from folio 1 recto in an incomplete or abridged form. The rest of the book has seven Parvans of the translation. The first six Parvans were copied in the sixteenth year of Muḥammad Shāh's reign (AH 1147/1734–35 CE), the first being dated the 19th Shawwāl, the second the 23rd of the same month, the third the 17th of Dhū al-Qa‘dah, the fifth the 15th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, the sixth the 27th of the same month, the fourth being without a special date. The seventh Parva is written in another hand and is dated in the twenty-fourth year of Muḥammad Shāh (28 Rabī‘ al-ʾAwwal 1155=Saturday 22 May 1742 CE). As can be seen from the illustration (Figure 21), the writing is hurried and not entirely clear. The following transcription shows what we have been able to determine, the underlined words for the moment uncertain.

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¹ Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office*, 1: 1083 no. 1931 (IO Islamic 762). In addition to the illustrations here, further folios are available online.
Synopsis

The colophon closes by saying that this is the seventh book and alludes to the arrival of the Kaurava army and themes concerning Jayadratha and Śiva. The Parvan, said to contain nine thousand nine hundred and eighty-nine śloka(s), was completed on the twenty eighth of Rabīʿ al-ʾAwwal during regnal year 24 of Muḥammad Shāh, as noted above.2 Muhammad Shāh’s royal line is then named: Jahān Shāh, Shāh ʿĀlam, Aurangzеб ʿĀlamgīr, Shāh Jahān, Jahāngīr, Akbar, Humāyūn and Bābur, each accorded titles. The need for a systematic comparison of colophons, to determine the stemma of the manuscript copies in later copies of the text, is highlighted by this example.

Notations

Right Bottom

2 Compare with the Preface, where the number of verses is said to be 8909, see Chapter 2, page 37 (printed text). The uncertainty of the verse count was present even the sixteenth-century, as noted elsewhere in this volume.
Figure 21: Razmnāmah. BL IO Islamic 762, folio 384v, colophon showing ownership notation and the seal of the East India Company, dated 1742. Courtesy of the British Library Board.
This notation presents a number of problems in terms of the names given and the purport, but it starts by saying this is the writing of the humble Ghor Singh, son of Harshāi, son of Bhimal, son of Dehchand, son of Sunder Dās Qum Puri. Qum Puri refers to a community prevalent in the Punjab. They were resident in a place called Gohārt and before that in Sialkot. Gujrat is mentioned as the location of Gohārt, most likely Gujrat, the town to the west of Sialkot. These individuals cannot be identified at this point but they were evidently owners of the manuscript, possibly in the eighteenth century. Further, the note states that one Bahādur Singh of Shāhjahānābād, in the neighbourhood of Khurd Saipura (?) in Pipal street, acquired or purchased this book on Saturday, but unfortunately no date is mentioned.

**Left Bottom, Written Next to the Notation Above**

نوشته بماند سینه بر سفید
نویسنده راست فردا امید

The author of this verse expresses hopes for the well-being of the text in future and that the paper will stay white and remain in the heart.

**Left Bottom, Written Upside Down**

هرکه خواند دعا طمع دارد
و گر نه من بنده گنه گارم.

Whoever recites the prayer is greedy, otherwise I am a slave to sin.

Generally speaking, authors and copyists often give prayers, blessings or curses to protect the book in question from damage or forgery. In the *Niʻmatnāmah* of the Sultan of Malwa, for example, the scribe invoked the ‘king of cockroaches’ in order to prevent the manuscript from being eaten by insects.³ The use of certain terms in valuable books also allowed writers and owners to indicate their humility. The two couplets given above were used frequently by Persian authors.

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On the page facing the colophon there is a small oval seal (Figure 22). The proposed reading is as follows.

هو العزيز الرحيم ایوبی
۷١
٩۸١

The seal can be translated as: “Ayyūbī, He (i.e. the Almighty) is the most merciful.” In terms of the numbers on the seal, zero or one are often omitted in the date, a practice seen in the Tafṣīl-i sikkah, a treatise on the coinage of Hindu and Muslim rulers in India wherein the dates on Jahāngīr’s coins are recorded as, for example, 114 instead of 1014, 118 instead of 1018, etc. Some seals in the British Museum collection also betray this practice, thus 211 for 1211, 124 for 1124, 113 for 1113 and

Figure 22: Razmnāmah. BL IO Islamic 762, folio 385r, detail of seal dated AH 1198/1775-76 CE. Courtesy of the British Library Board.

189 for 1189. With these examples falling in the eighteenth century, and the aforementioned manuscript dated AH 1198/1783–84 CE, it is likely that 189 in the present seal means 1189. The corresponding date is 1775–76 CE. This falls in the reign of Shāh ʿĀlam II. The number 17 should be the regnal year, and given Shāh ʿĀlam II claimed the throne in 1759, this seems a plausible explanation. On the basis of the seal, it seems that the manuscript came into the hands of Ayyūbī, or was put into his custody, at this date. This person has not been identified otherwise at this point but a systematic study of seals may reveal more about him.
