A HITHERTO UNKNOWN WORK ASCRIBED TO MİR DĀMĀD

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Was glänzt, ist für den Augenblick geboren,
Das Echte bleibt der Nachwelt unverloren.

Glitter is coined to meet the moment’s rage;
The genuine lives on from age to age.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)\(^1\)

The reign of the Šafawid Shāh ʿAbbās Ibn Muḥammad Khudābanda (ruled 995–1038/1588–1629)\(^2\) witnessed a remarkable flourishing of high culture. Perhaps the most intellectually significant dimension of this cultural renaissance was in the realm of philosophical inquiry represented by a number of scholars who have been collectively designated as “the School of Iṣfahān.” This group of scholars included figures such as Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640) (known as Mullā Ṣadrā), Qāḍī Saʿīd al-Qummī (d. 1103/1691), Shaykh Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Husayn al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1030/1621), Mīr Fīndirīskī (d. 1050/1640), ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Lāhījī (d. 1072/1661), Muḥammad Ibn Mūrtādā al-Kāshānī (known as Muḥsin al-Faydī) (d. 1091/1680), and the philosopher Mīr Būrḥān al-Dīn Muḥammad Bāqīr (known as Mīr Dāmād) (d. 1041/1631).\(^3\)

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\(^2\) Clifford Edmund Bosworth, The Islamic Dynasties (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 279. All subsequent references to regnal years will be based on this work.

\(^3\) On the School of Iṣfahān see Hamid Dabashi, “Mīr Dāmād and the Founding of the ‘School of Iṣfahān,’” in Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, The History of Islamic Philosophy, 2 vols. (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 597–636; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The School of Iṣfahān,”
Mīr Dāmād, recognised as an eminent scholar in his own lifetime, came from a distinguished learned family. His maternal grandfather, ʿAlī Ibn Ḥusayn Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAlī al-Karāḵī (d. 940/1534), known as al-Muḥaqqiq al-Thānī and al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karāḵī, was a leading figure in legal studies and became a powerful cleric during the reign of Shāh Tāhmāsp Ibn Ismāʿīl (ruled 930–984).  

Mīr Muḥammad Bāqir inherited the epithet “Dāmād,” which in Persian means son-in-law, from his father Mīr Shams al-Dīn who married the daughter of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Karāḵī and who thus became widely known as “the son-in-law” of the distinguished cleric.  


Ibn al-Ḥusayn (d. 61/680)  

Ibn ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (40/661).  

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5 Hamid Dabashi, “Mīr Dāmād and the Founding of the ‘School of Isfahān’,” 1: 603.  