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The Cambridge “Gang” Meets Iranian Intellectual History: Reimagining Conservatism In Context

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The Iranian humanities publication Farhang Emrooz (Today’s Culture) published a series of articles on the Cambridge school of intellectual history in May 2016. The journal’s colloquium, while hardly the only intervention on the Cambridge school by Iranian scholars, constitutes perhaps the most sophisticated exploration to date of the relationship between the school and Iranian intellectual history. It also excavates what Professor Hātām Qāderī defines as conservative currents of historiography in England and Iran. How, this article asks, is Cambridge-style history presented as a conservative approach and what might the school’s Iranian reception tell us about the purpose of such a presentation? Furthermore, how do Qāderī and his peers attempt to reform Iranian historiography by diverging from other historiographical currents in Iran?

During a crisis of liberalism in the 1960s, when postmodernism challenged truth claims and social history was growing in popularity, several University of Cambridge professors sought to promote a new approach to writing history.¹ The Cambridge school, for which a consensus on method by no means exists, placed greater emphasis on language, authorial intention, and context for understanding texts, an approach that attracted a wide range of students and historians while also engendering debate.² Among the doyens of the Cambridge school are John Dunn, J. G. A. Pocock, and, perhaps best known, Quentin Skinner. In Skinner’s words, he sought to “see things [the author’s] way,” paying greater attention to authorial intention in writing intellectual history than did his colleagues.³ Indeed, Skinner appears to have made a unique impact beyond Anglo-American academe, extending globally with notoriety among Iranian intellectuals.

But Skinner’s popularity among Iranian intellectuals is a recent phenomenon. Since 2014, the Cambridge school has emerged as a relevant and appealing “method” for historical inquiry among some Iranian intellectuals. Despite its

¹Anthony Grafton, “The History of Ideas: Precept and Practice, 1950–2000 and Beyond,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67/1 (2006), 1–32, at 3. The collapse of liberalism, says Grafton, “undermined the Americanist pursuit of a unified ‘national mind’, leaving the field open for social historians who emphasized the varied experiences of those groups that the older picture had omitted.” In Europe, unified visions of intellectual traditions also fell out of fashion. See also Alan Brinkley, *Liberalism and Its Discontents* (Cambridge, MA, 1998).

²Grafton, “The History of Ideas,” 23–6.

³Danny Millum, “Quentin Skinner,” *Making History: The Changing Face of the Profession in Britain*, 18 April 2008, at www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/interviews/Skinner_Quentin.html.

translation into Persian as early as 1994, Skinner's *Machiavelli* failed at the time to attract much attention, let alone inspire further translation.⁴ Neither did Skinner's book instigate public debate in Iran on his methodology. Only since 2014, it seems, due in part to a handful of Iranian professors and intellectuals, has the Cambridge school gained noticeable currency in Iran.⁵ The recent popularity of Skinner's thought has resulted in debates on why and how a historical approach that originally—and almost exclusively—focused on a Western or European narrative might be relevant to Iranian history and historiography. While some of these debates have appropriated Skinner's method for revising Islamic historiography in twentieth-century Iran,⁶ this article will focus primarily on another aspect of the Cambridge school's Iranian appeal, namely its so-called conservatism.

Marking neither the first nor the only exploration of the Cambridge school in Iran, the Iran-based humanities publication *Farhang Emrooz* (Today's Culture) showcased a series of articles on the topic in May 2016. *Farhang Emrooz's* colloquium, entitled "The Gang of Cambridge: A Look at the Cambridge School's Methodology in the Historiography of Thought,"⁷ not only appears to be the most sophisticated exploration to date on the relationship between the Cambridge school and Iranian intellectuals, but also excavates what one author identifies as a shared intellectual turn in England and Iran at different moments. This turn is most apparent, indicates Professor Hātam Qāderī in his interview, "Among Conservatism and Historiography. Hātam Qāderī: The Cambridge School Can Help Us More than Positivism," in conservative currents of thought in both countries. It is perhaps no coincidence that the Weimer-era-jurist-cum-National Socialist and theorist of political theology, Carl Schmitt, appears on the cover of the issue next to the heading "Against Liberalism."⁸ What, however, is the relationship between conservatism as an intellectual or political tradition in Iran and its English counterpart, and how might the Cambridge school be understood as part of a conservative tradition? Additionally, how does Qāderī repackaging the Cambridge school as a conservative project that might benefit Iranian

⁴Muhammad-Taqi Shari'ati, "Qarā't-i kambriji az andisha: dar zarurat va ahamiyat-i tarikhnigari-yi andisha-yi kambriji," *Farhang-i Imruz* 11 (2016), 72–3.

⁵Matin Ghaffariyan, "Butshikana ushura-ha-yi mudurn tarikhi: darbāra-yi Quentin Skinner bā bahāna-yi intishār-i kitāb binash-hā-yi 'ilm-i siyāsāt," *Mihrnāma* 37 (2014), 268; Mūsā Akramī, "Matn-i siyāsī dar maqām-i kumash-i siyāsī: Ku'intin Iskinar: nigāhi bih mubāni-yi ravish-i shinākhti va dastāvard-hā," *Mihrnāma* 37 (2014), 271–4; Muhammad-Javad Ghulāmrižā-Kāshī, "Farākhān-i Skinner bih maydān-i manāz'a Irāni," *Mihrnāma* 37 (2014), 269–70; 'Alī-Bāqiri Dawlat-Ābādi and Sayyid Aḥmad Mūsawī, "Ta'asir-sanji-yi tafsir-i din bar āra'-i siyāsī-yi Muhammad-Taqi Mišbah-Yazdi," *Pazuheshhaye Rahbordī Enghelabe Eslami* 1/2 (2018), 1–37.

⁶Alexander Nachman, "Quentin Skinner beh Fārsi: A Contextualist Reckoning of Islamic Protestantism," *MIZAN: Journal for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations* 4/1 (2020), at <https://mizanproject.org/journal-post/quentin-skinner-beh-farsi>.

⁷"Dār va dasta-yi kambriji-hā: nigāhi bih ravish-shināsi-yi maktab-i kambriji dar tarikhnigari-yi andisha," *Farhang-i Imruz* 11 (2016), 71–92.

⁸Hātam Qāderī is a professor of political science at Tarbiyat Modares University in Tehran. See Hātam Qāderī, "Dar miyān-i muḥāfiẓahkārī va tarikhnigārī: Hātam Qāderī: maktab-i Cambridge bih az pūzitivizm mi tavānad bih mā komak konad," *Farhang-i Imruz* 11 (2016), 79–82; *Farhang-i Imruz* 11 (2016), cover page. On Carl Schmitt's popularity in Iran see Milad Odabaei, "The Outside (Kharij) of Tradition in the Aftermath of the Revolution: Carl Schmitt and Islamic Knowledge in Postrevolutionary Iran," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 39/2 (2019), 296–311.

intellectual history while diverging from other historiographical currents expressed by Iranian intellectuals? My intention is neither to rehash nor to reclassify conservative politics in Iran but to reveal a novel strand of conservatism and its functions.

In proposing new historical methods and a novel articulation of tradition, Qāderī and his peers represent what Omnia El Shakry terms “originators of theoretical models” and “producers of thought.” In other words, they are best understood as theoreticians on their own terms rather than as mediators of Eurocentric ideas or objects of study.⁹ Indeed, a component of Qāderī’s intention is to remove from Iranian intellectual history aspects of Eurocentric mediation, particularly some French and German method and theory, for example the neologistic style of Heidegger, on whom some Iranian thinkers have drawn. The features of a public sphere within which Qāderī functions is in part due to the postrevolutionary period when the translation of foreign philosophical and political texts dramatically increased. This phenomenon was a consequence of the Cultural Revolution, which immediately proceeded from the Iranian Revolution and resulted in the dismissal of Western-educated officials and educators from various institutions, eventually leading to translation as a new source of income for many who lost their livelihoods.¹⁰ While one would find similar discussions of history in parts of the Arabic-speaking world, the scale on which these discussions and translations occur in Iran is arguably unrivaled, leading to a saturation of domestic debate and influences and, thus, to a unique exchange of intellectual and political traditions.

This article first explores what Qāderī means by “conservatism” through an assessment of how recent debates on context and authorial intention help explain the Cambridge school’s popularity among some Iranian intellectual historians. Some participants in these Iranian debates have espoused views that are skeptical or conservative in method and scope, thus seeking to subdue lofty comparisons between contexts or broad lexical interpretation. An overview of these debates reveals the conservative nature of Cambridge-style history to better understand how Qāderī instrumentalizes a narrative of conservatism when twinning Iranian and English intellectual history. The final section examines how the rise of the Cambridge school in Iran is related to politicized visions of history among both politicians and intellectuals.¹¹ This article will conclude by briefly exploring the implications, if any, of Qāderī’s idea of conservatism not only in the theoretical, but also in the practical, arena—in electoral and parliamentary politics.

The Iranian appeal and the limits of Cambridge school contextualism

Recent debates on the roles of context and authorial intent have centred around their limits or transcendence. Most intellectual historians who participate in these debates accept the importance of context and author to varying degrees

⁹Omnia El Shakry, “Rethinking Arab Intellectual History: Epistemology, Historicism, Secularism,” *Modern Intellectual History* 18/2 (2021), 547–72, at 550.

¹⁰Esmāeil Haddadian-Moghaddam, *Literary Translation in Modern Iran: A Sociological Study* (Amsterdam, 2014), 118–19.

¹¹The Cambridge school as an alternative and conservative historical method is shared in the pages of other Iranian magazines. See Ghulāmriżā-Kāshī, “Farākhān-i Skinner,” 269–70.

but they differ on the function of these elements. The following explores a few approaches to context and author with on some contemporary Iranian intellectuals have found common ground.

The edited volume entitled *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* was published in 2017, the same year as Qāderī's interview. The volume appraises intellectual history's resurgence while posing theoretical challenges to some of the field's long-held principles to promote a reconciliation with other subdisciplines such as social history. Cambridge-style contextualism plays a prominent role in its pages. "Historians should not endorse contextualism as a global and exhaustive theory of meaning," warns the Harvard historian Peter Eli Gordon.¹² The "exhaustive" view, to the historian's detriment, restricts important explanatory and intellectual potential while reinforcing interdisciplinary boundaries.¹³ Gordon instead advocates for qualified allegiance to contextualism. For Gordon, an idea can hold relevance beyond its original articulation. Indeed, Gordon argues that in presenting the past as a "foreign country," one might misinterpret the historian's purpose other than as a concern for the past as a passage and transformation of time, which by Gordon's account is a "series of moments (punctual time)" as well as "the extension between them (differential time)."¹⁴ It is then the historian's responsibility to balance these two conflictual notions of time in order to resist ahistoricism (if emphasizing the former brand of time) and so that their argument does not unravel without constraint (if emphasizing the latter brand).

As Skinner explained early in his career, when reconstructing the world surrounding a concept's initial articulation, one is able to account for the full range of meanings that an author intended for his or her concept, term, or idea.¹⁵ Gordon critiques several aspects of this proposal, arguing that concepts maintain their temporal relevance precisely because meaning cannot be exhausted in a singular moment or space. Past philosophers might also have intended their work to reach beyond a single region or epoch.¹⁶ "Historical empathy"—in contrast to an objectivist logic through which a utopian past is reconstructed to harmonize an idea with its context—offers the opportunity to reconcile the above notions of stasis and movement. Doing so, Gordon concludes, allows one to value context without exhaustion while offering the possibility of transcending a singular social order, discipline, and context.¹⁷

There is nothing "determinative outside texts except other texts," argues early Skinner, according to Samuel Moyn.¹⁸ In the same volume, Moyn asserts that, notwithstanding Skinner's later creative endeavours to expand contextual boundaries, texts constitute the most important context. This principle helped fortify the barriers for intellectual historians against the need to account for social theory and

¹²Peter E. Gordon, "Contextualism and Criticism in the History of Ideas," in Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn, eds., *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (Oxford, 2014), 32–55, at 33.

¹³*Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 34–5.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 37–9.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 50–52.

¹⁸Samuel Moyn, "Imaginary Intellectual History," in McMahon and Moyn, *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, 112–30, at 113.

practice, barriers which Moyn accuses Gordon of defending, “albeit with greater allowance” than Skinner “for how concepts can escape the intellectual discussions that only temporarily and partially constitute them.”¹⁹ Yet Moyn departs from a strict, Cambridge-style approach in a different way than Gordon does. Instead of focusing on ways in which concepts might transcend their methodological limits, Moyn advocates tying concepts or ideas to social practices.

Moyn sees the possibility of overcoming the distinction between representations and practices through something called the “social imaginary.” First theorized in 1964 by Cornelius Castoriadis as a response to a crisis of Marxism, the social imaginary addresses the role of representations and ideas in the making of social order and practice without reducing ideas to a legitimating gesture.²⁰ As Moyn points out, Skinner admitted in 2002 that his own goal matches that of Castoriadis, but Skinner defines the social imaginary as subjective culture instead of something concerned with social structures and practices.²¹ Taking the social imaginary into account, explains Moyn, enables intellectual historians to theorize ideology, which until now had either been avoided or vaguely defined, in part because those concerned with ideology had often prioritized social practice over representation.²²

The disputes over contextualism and comparison came to a head when comparisons between Donald Trump and Adolf Hitler or fascism became commonplace. Justified by his notion of historical empathy, Gordon has defended the possibility of such comparisons on the basis that difference does not imply incommensurability. Nor does the phrase “the past is a foreign country” imply that two events are incomparable; the phrase merely warns against presentism. Instead, analogy and comparison allow us to relate to past events and empathize with victims of genocide while recognizing their particularities without depoliticization. “If every crime is unique and the moral imagination is forbidden from comparison, then the injunction ‘Never Again’ itself loses its meaning, since nothing can ever happen ‘again’.”²³ For Moyn, on the other hand, such analogy is irresponsible because it grafts the context of responsibility onto another event, deracinating the uniquely American roots of Trump. Understanding Trump as an aberration through lofty comparisons, unbridled by the “ballast of contrast,” rather than as continuity from his predecessors and a product of American history, risks failing to imagine a better future.²⁴

Marci Shore, however, argues that “the question about historical comparison should not be a yes or no question, but a *how* question.”²⁵ While “the epistemological commitment to singularity” is appealing for some philosophers because it

¹⁹Ibid., 113.

²⁰Ibid., 116.

²¹Ibid., 124.

²²Ibid., 114.

²³Peter E. Gordon, “Why Historical Analogy Matters,” *New York Review of Books*, 7 Jan. 2020, at www.nybooks.com/daily/2020/01/07/why-historical-analogy-matters.

²⁴Samuel Moyn, “The Trouble with Comparisons,” *New York Review of Books*, 20 May 2020, at www.nybooks.com/daily/2020/05/19/the-trouble-with-comparisons/?lp_txn_id=1269561.

²⁵Marci Shore, “On the Uses and Disadvantages of Historical Comparisons for Life,” *Public Seminar*, 19 Oct. 2020, at <https://publicseminar.org/essays/on-the-uses-and-disadvantages-of-historical-comparisons-for-life>.

is “bound up with a moral commitment to responsibility,” this does not mean that comparison must mitigate responsibility.²⁶ As such, departures from “singularity” or “univocality” need not be diachronic but may even function in a punctual moment of stasis through the translatability of language and experience, for example in translating the poetry of one language and one people into the languages of other suffering peoples. Because no two moments are ever exactly the same, the question of extracting the universal from the particular must motivate and animate the comparison. For Shore, an exhaustive description of a singular event inhibits an understanding of the universal and the comparative.²⁷

Because, as Moyn explains, a commitment to context unites the Cambridge school with most other approaches to intellectual history, the growing interest in ideology and social practice among intellectual historians has necessitated self-critique and engagement. Moreover, Skinner’s statements on social theory indicate the possibility of a modified Cambridge approach to intellectual history. A consideration of ideology in context is therefore important not only for thinking of how representations might constitute social practice, argues Moyn, but also—and more relevant to our current discussion—for understanding the more recent appeal of the Cambridge school beyond anglophone intellectual history.

For Qāderī and some of his peers, the Cambridge school seems best suited to combat ideology in Iranian intellectual history rather than theorizing ideology. He engages with ideology in his social and intellectual context in order to extricate its influence from historical practice in Iran. Opposed to strict positivism because of its constraints on inquiry, Qāderī instead promotes a “reformed positivism” to correct the rampant subjectivism of Iranian historians, influenced in part by the French and German traditions; Qāderī also emphasizes Skinner’s growing popularity in Iran.²⁸ This approach diverges from that of others, such as the journalist Matīn Ghaffāriyān and Professor Mohammad-Javād Gholāmrezā-Kāshī, the former of whom advocates the Skinnerian method against what he labels “psychological nativism”—an ahistorical or purely textualist understanding of concepts—as a trend resulting in part from Leo Strauss’s popularity in Iran.²⁹ Gholāmrezā-Kāshī, in his own intervention on the Cambridge school, describes the popularity of a “non-radical” trend of positivism as a rational approach, present from the late 1960s, which attempted to confine critique to an empirical reality and objective criteria. Eventually, he says, this trend resulted in an attempt by intellectuals to force ideological consensus using methodology as a justification.³⁰ Gholāmrezā-Kāshī deploys strict contextualism against the rise of post-revolutionary trends in intellectual history, some of which, he argues, are used erroneously to define and redefine the legacy of Iranian intellectuals. It is these trends against which he wields Skinner as a weapon. In particular, he argues, contemporary historians focusing on the revolutionary philosopher and sociologist ‘Alī Sharī‘atī (d. 1977), coopt Sharī‘atī’s notion of Islamic Protestantism in various ways, which, Gholāmrezā-Kāshī argues,

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Qādirī, “Dar miyān-i muḥāfiẓahkārī va tārikhnigārī,” 81–2.

²⁹See note 5 above.

³⁰Muḥammad-Javād Ghulāmriẓā-Kāshī, “Farākhān-i Iskīnir bih maydān-i munāzi‘a Īrānī,” *Mihrnāma* 37 (2014), 269–70.

must be differentiated from Luther and Calvin's ideas and placed in its own proper context to be separated from post-revolutionary or Western favoritism.³¹

While Gholāmreżā-Kāshī confronts ideology as an intellectual or philosophical position fitted to serve political aims (in his case, the 2016 parliamentary elections), ideology for Qāderī is more complicated. Despite lacking a clear definition of ideology, Qāderī's concept of ideology is broader than that of Gholāmreżā-Kāshī, though perhaps not as expansive as Skinner's—a broadness for which Martyn P. Thompson has critiqued Skinner.³² Nevertheless, even if Qāderī and Gholāmreżā-Kāshī avoid ideology's theorization, they both confront it. Additionally, Qāderī and Gholāmreżā-Kāshī adopt the Cambridge school to change their immediate social reality through intellectual reform. The final section of this article explores the broader relationship between intellectual history and ideology in Iran. But what is the relationship between the Cambridge approach and conservatism?

Conservatism(s) in context

In an attempt to understand liberalism, Edmund Fawcett has argued, one should start “not with liberty ... but with historical predicament.”³³ Conservatism is no different and the issue of political liberty and its limits will be addressed only toward the end of this article because it plays a minor role in the present discussion. Qāderī is concerned with conservatism less as an approach to political liberty or democracy than as a restrained or limited historical method against other approaches that have distorted the practice of intellectual history in Iran. That being said, Qāderī contextualizes the Cambridge school's emergence within European intellectual and political instability in the twentieth century. It is also crucial to note that the attraction of some Iranian intellectuals to intellectual history as an academic discipline following the 1979 Iranian Revolution was in part occasioned by the failure of Marxist and liberal nationalist political factions to assert influence in the new government. To be sure, an aversion to Marxism or liberal nationalism has contributed to the appeal not only of intellectual history but also of the Cambridge school. Such an appeal is marginal for modernists in the United States, as McMahon and Moyn argue, “for reasons that no one has adequately explained,” but where there nevertheless exists a “distinctly American tradition of ‘intellectual history’.”³⁴ Such a selective appeal indicates that the elements of conservatism picked up by Qāderī are those he deems useful for coping with a lived history of revolution and ideology present in Iranian politics and intellectual history. And while it might be paradoxical that Qāderī draws on a *more* “liberal” or open approach to the Cambridge school than its original iteration, while still defining it as conservative, his conservative label is meant as a position not on

³¹Ibid.

³²Thompson takes issue with Skinner's definition of all political texts as ideological, without distinguishing between philosophical and practical texts, thus erroneously and ironically failing to contextualize them properly. See Martyn P. Thompson, *Michael Oakeshott and the Cambridge School on the History of Political Thought* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 6.

³³Edmund Fawcett, *Liberalism: The Life of an Idea* (Princeton, 2014), 24.

³⁴Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn, “Introduction,” in McMahon and Moyn, *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, 3–12, at 8.

the spectrum of global approaches to the Cambridge school but rather on the spectrum of positions espoused by Iranian intellectual historians.

Concurrently, the diversity of Iranian conservatism—which should not be misconstrued as necessarily radical or reactionary—has failed to attract the same scholarly attention as radicalism or reformism. Similar claims have been made for the American context because of the changing meaning of “liberal” and demographic shifts between Democrats and Republicans, including regional variants.³⁵ But such arguments no longer hold true. Studies on conservatism in its various manifestations in America and beyond are abundant, demonstrated by scholars of American conservatism such as Lauren R. Kerby, Kevin M. Kruse, and Jill Lepore. The discussion that follows will also explore some connections between international conservatisms, including its American iteration, through the works of Emily Jones, Richard Bourke, and Jan-Werner Müller.³⁶ Yet for Iran, where liberal and reformist thought, on the one hand, and revolutionary or radical Islamist politics, on the other hand, have received extensive scholarly attention, studies on conservatism have been comparatively marginal.³⁷ Perhaps one reason for the lack of scholarly attention to conservatism in Iran is not because conservatism lacks coherence—for so does liberalism—but because post-revolutionary conservatism is perceived to lack a dynamism worthy of study; conservatism is said to promote prudent political change, the preservation of entrenched arrangements, and preserving “values against radical change” without an enduring doctrine.³⁸ But these definitions also ignore the possibility of radical or revolutionary conservative movements. Moreover, as J. G. A. Pocock has argued, “too many minds have been trying to conserve too many things for too many reasons,” making it exceedingly difficult to write a history of conservatism,³⁹ though arguably no more difficult than one of liberalism. How, then, might we account for conservatism?

Iranian discussions of conservatism not only reveal an aspect of its appeal in Iran’s present intellectual context, but also offer a potential rereading of conservatism. One could ask, how might thought be described as conservative based on the uses of the past instead of reducing ideas or statements to a label for friends or against foes? The most popular exposition on Iranian conservatism and, for that matter, on the gamut of Iranian factional politics from the “modern right” to “radical,” “fundamentalist,” or “left,” was written between 1994 and 1995 by Behzād

³⁵Brinkley, *Liberalism and Its Discontents*, 281–4.

³⁶See Lauren R. Kerby, *Saving History: How White Evangelicals Tour the Nation’s Capital and Redeem a Christian America* (Chapel Hill, 2020); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, 2005); Jill Lepore, *The Whites of Their Eyes: The Tea Party’s Revolution and the Battle over American History* (Princeton, 2010).

³⁷For an exemplary study of Iranian reformism see Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, *Revolution and Its Discontents: Political Thought and Reform in Iran* (Cambridge, 2019). On the dearth of scholarship on conservative or nonliberal thinkers see also Max Weiss and Jens Hanssen, “Introduction,” in Weiss and Hanssen, eds., *Arabic Thought against the Authoritarian Age: Towards an Intellectual History of the Present* (Cambridge, 2018), 1–36, at 22–3.

³⁸Richard Bourke, “What Is Conservatism? History, Ideology and Party,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 17/4 (2018), 449–75, at 452–3.

³⁹J. G. A. Pocock, “Introduction,” in Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Indianapolis, 1987), vii–xlvi, at xlix, as quoted in Bourke, “What Is Conservatism?,” 451–4.

Nabavī in a series of articles in the biweekly *‘Asr-e mā*. These articles, upon which Mehdi Moslem based his study *Factional Politics in Post-Khomeini Iran*, were the first of their kind following the revolution. Nabavī’s work showcases a who’s who of clerics, institutions, and politicians in the Islamic Republic, matching factional nomenclature (i.e. Executives of Construction, the Endurance Front, and Alliance of Builders) and their political labels with policies focusing mostly on economics and Islamic jurisprudence. But the Cambridge appeal, Qāderī argues, lies not in its role as a conservative political ideology of the kind with which Nabavī is concerned. Instead, it is an alternative to historical perspectives that explicitly favour political positions; that is, against ambiguous terminology and theory rooted in twentieth-century French and German traditions.⁴⁰

Qāderī’s article was published adjacent to Richard Bourke’s narrative of the of the Cambridge school’s evolution, entitled “Opposition to Sophistry and Teleology: Contemplating the Essence of the Cambridge School in Farhang Emrooz’s Conversation with Richard Bourke.”⁴¹ Bourke, chair in the history of political thought at King’s College, Cambridge, has asked elsewhere, “what is conservatism?”⁴² Others, such as Emily Jones, have explored the diachronical and geographical diversity of conservatism as a political tradition, while Jan-Werner Müller has theorized conservatism as an ideology.

The excavation of past concepts to correct present ills is a frequent strategy of politicians and historians alike.⁴³ Indeed, it is arguably a universal hallmark of politics. Yet the ambiguity and applicability of concepts, from seemingly neutral methodological concepts like contextualism to more explicitly political ones like conservatism, enable their longevity.⁴⁴ Conservatism in England and other parts of Europe, and in America for some, is not only associated with a “founder” or “father,” Edmund Burke (d. 1797), but also paradoxically defined and redefined as a global political concept representing contingent and diverse values, which have varied with context since at least the nineteenth century, long after Burke’s death.⁴⁵ And as illustrated by Richard Bourke, conservatism can easily be summoned retroactively to describe a collection of ideas or as an alternative to dominant strands of thought during a crisis. But deracinating conservatism’s conceptual history from its present use has become commonplace, for it is now used to define the entire spectrum of traditional, reactionary, antimodern and/or antiliberal positions.

⁴⁰Neguin Yavari, “Introduction,” *MIZAN: Journal for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations* 4/1 (2020), at <https://mizanproject.org/journal-post/editors-introduction>.

⁴¹Richard Bourke, “Satiz bā safaṣa va farjām-siyāsī: ta’amulī bar chisti maktab-i Kambrij dar guft-ū-gū-yi Farhang-i Imrūz bā Richard Bourke,” *Farhang-i Imrūz* 11 (May 2016), 83–5. Translation: Richard Bourke, “The Cambridge School,” at <https://projects.history.qmul.ac.uk/hpt/2016/06/27/interview-with-richard-bourke-on-the-cambridge-school-for-the-iranian-journal-farhangemrooz-todays-culture>.

⁴²Bourke, “What Is Conservatism?”

⁴³*Ibid.*, 450.

⁴⁴For the ambiguity of sovereignty as a political concept, for example, see Richard Bourke, “Introduction,” in Richard Bourke and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Popular Sovereignty in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, 2016), 1–15.

⁴⁵Emily Jones, *Edmund Burke and the Invention of Modern Conservatism, 1830–1914: An Intellectual History* (Oxford, 2017), as cited in Bourke, “What Is Conservatism?”, 458.

As Emily Jones argues, Burkean conservatism is neither a product of Burke's contemporaries nor his own political identity. It is instead the result of the British Conservative Party's debate on the Home Rule crisis in the 1880s,⁴⁶ and conservatism has undergone various mutations and manifestations in America and Britain since.⁴⁷ While presently "summarized as a belief in the organic nature of society and politics (hence a dislike of 'mechanical' abstract theory when applied to practical politics); reverence for history and tradition; and respect for religion, property, and order," Burkean conservatism has also been presented as utilitarian, positivist, and liberal, as well as anticommunist. But these associations hardly square with the historical Burke.⁴⁸ Conservatism for Jones therefore requires an understanding of how ideas are articulated and received at the time of their use. In this sense, Jones's approach to conservatism also draws on a contextual method, resisting anachronistic definitions of conservatism. The conservative features of thought, whether intellectual or more overtly political, are thus conservative not because of an a priori definition but because of the ways in which these features have been moulded over time into a tradition and deployed against one's opponents. In studying conservatism as a tradition, one can attend to the developments and changes that occur in inherited beliefs or genealogies presented to influence political identity.⁴⁹ Qāderī's conservatism is thus best understood as a tradition because of the genealogy he narrates, despite neither the Cambridge school having gained a conservative reputation nor Qāderī really attempting to essentialize it as such.

With Jones's method, a narrative of conservative Cambridge-style history in Iran becomes clearer when contrasted with Jan-Werner Müller's idea of conservatism as an ideology, to which he assigns four criteria. One would be hard-pressed to argue that (*pace* Müller) intellectuals who advocate greater contextualism, such as Qāderī, are attempting to (1) maintain their privileges; (2) assert natural, hierarchical social structures; or (3) carefully manage social/historical change. Although Müller admits that his framework might not necessarily apply to non-Western conservatism, noteworthy is his third criterion in which he highlights an affinity between conservative strands of thought and postmodernism vis-à-vis their attention to "the marginal, the potential victims of history and of ideologies of progress in particular."⁵⁰ To be sure, the Cambridge appeal in Iran indicates that, rather than a concern for a history from below or for groups ignored by historiography (the subaltern, perhaps?), the Cambridge school is mobilized to depart from Euro-American theory's dominance of Iranian historical methods. How, then, does Qāderī establish a narrative and adopt the Cambridge school's conservatism to accomplish this?

⁴⁶Bourke, "What Is Conservatism?", 458.

⁴⁷On Burke's influence in America see Robert J. Lacey, *Pragmatic Conservatism: Edmund Burke and His American Heirs* (New York, 2016).

⁴⁸Jones, *Edmund Burke*, 1–3.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 9–10.

⁵⁰Jan-Werner Müller, "Comprehending Conservatism: A New Framework for Analysis," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11/3 (2006), 359–65, at 362.

The Cambridge school and conservative history as political thought in England and Iran

Intellectual history as a discipline in its current form developed, waxed, and waned, according to Grafton, in opposition to leftist or Marxist methodologies—on which social history is based—which tended to place class at the centre of inquiry and material conditions as the basis for ideology.⁵¹ Other currents of European thought, Qāderī notes, such as the Vienna school and postmodernism, contributed to the intellectual instability and uncertainty of their era. Qāderī's brief explanation of late nineteenth-/twentieth-century European and Iranian intellectual development leads him to contend that the Cambridge school can benefit Iranian historiography. This benefit is the result of a synthesis rather than a clash between Iranian and English history via conservatism: the Cambridge school "I think can assist us [Iranians] to an extent in productive collisions [resulting] from conflicts with different European and American processes of thinking and philosophizing."⁵²

For Qāderī, the Cambridge school opens up novel possibilities, unbound by ideology or faction, for understanding Iranian history. Independence from ideology or faction, however, does not mean depoliticization. In Qāderī's narrative, Skinner *et al.* emerged as a school subsequent to the 1960s in the context of global political, social, and scholarly transformations. The global changes that eventually led to the emergence of the Cambridge school were a result of political and intellectual uncertainty as well as upheaval between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Edmund Husserl (d. 1938), one of the credited fathers of phenomenology, along with two variant generations of pragmatists in America, contextualizes the emergence of the Cambridge school and its context-centric method, which, Qāderī notes, is by no means absolutist but dependent on a search for meaning:⁵³

everyone wanted to distance themselves from the unrest of the beginning of the twentieth century and the end of the nineteenth century, having been the cause of Romantic spaces and even fascist movements, and to return to a space where a human need was felt ... When I look at the active arenas of philosophy ... the Cambridge school also seeks that which provides a stable footing for us, at least that which exists for the history of ideas.⁵⁴

By Qāderī's account the Cambridge school is a consequence of historical, lived trauma and the inadequacies of pragmatism and phenomenology for providing satisfactory answers in understanding this trauma. Two world wars and fascism, and later the start of the Cold War, as well as a new international legal order, required new ways of thinking about the past and present. On the other hand, Qāderī notes, kernels of positivism are found in both phenomenology and pragmatism in different ways: "positivists see philosophy as a mere science"; that is, they establish fal-

⁵¹Grafton, "The History of Ideas," 2–4. Skinner also points to a conflict with Marxist historical methods and their decline in Millum, "Quentin Skinner"; Moyn, "Imaginary Intellectual History."

⁵²Qāderī, "Dar miyān-i muḥāfiẓahkārī va tāriḫnigārī," 80.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

sifiable and general, yet inalienable, claims for their inquiries.⁵⁵ But the Cambridge school's goal is to avoid such truth claims, adapting philosophy—broadly understood—into a mode of inquiry not only for understanding the importance and meaning of philosophical practice for the present, but also taking into account the role and beliefs of the philosopher in writing history. “In my belief,” says Qāderī, “phenomenology and pragmatism ... want to bypass philosophy and knowledge to benefit social interest. But the school wants to achieve, to the extent possible, greater conformity with knowledge.”⁵⁶

with attention to the context of their own instability, as well as the things which Europeans had experienced with the wave of modernity ... the post-modern becomes important in order to return to a place which could be more assured, calm, and precise ... In this way, the Cambridge school is a conservative school and this is not far from that space of thought in England.⁵⁷

But Qāderī further specifies his idea of conservatism. When one wants to make further adaptations to one's thought, he explains, “philosophizing decreases and you become closer to conservatism so as not to deviate from the application of thought”; rationale and reasoning are more closely aligned with the subject matter (e.g. text).⁵⁸ This approach, he says, “can be a continuation from the English philosophical tradition, and that conservative school of theirs, whether in philosophy, political thought, or politics.”⁵⁹ While a neologicistic-style of writing gained popularity in France, Germany, and other places, the English method of history generally focused on the meaning and application of terms. Through the brief genealogy given, Qāderī associates the Cambridge school's conservatism as philosophical restraint with greater adherence to text and author. He admits that while the Cambridge school's conservative nature might present the same dangers for Iranians as it has for the English, as for example the prevention of creative thinking so that fecund digressions are ignored, or strengthening conservatism so that new philosophical opportunities are avoided, he nevertheless believes that there is value in using the Cambridge school for all varieties of texts, including, it should be noted, Islamic ones.

“But isn't one of the dangers,” asks the interviewer, Moḥammad-Taqī Shari'atī, “the reduction of political thought to history or, in other words, conservatism?”⁶⁰ The Cambridge school, Qāderī answers, minimized philosophical practice as a response to existentialism and other intellectual products of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's ideological uncertainty. They did so in order to establish a firmer footing; that is, to be able to find a semblance of stability in the emptiness engendered by existentialist thought. Nevertheless, he notes, the Cambridge school's formation is not unrelated to Continental philosophy and it did not

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

materialize in a vacuum. The Cambridge school's emphasis on language is owed to analytical philosophy's linguistic component. But, Qāderī notes, Ludwig Wittgenstein's (d. 1951) analysis of language, among others, also constituted a brand of conservatism because Wittgenstein prohibited the destruction of the fundamentals for the sake of philosophy.⁶¹ Such a linguistic turn, posited Arthur Lovejoy (d. 1962), is a twentieth-century phenomenon.⁶² Lovejoy, the historian of "unit ideas," also thought it important to study particular words and their contexts.⁶³ But the various linguistic trends, whether radical or moderate in form, which emerged in Europe, emerged, in Qāderī's assessment, at the expense of philosophical practice. Philosophy, according to the radical approach, must be subsumed in linguistic analysis; "we cannot understand anything outside of language," they say.⁶⁴ This was a general view held by the legal positivist John Austin (d. 1859) and Wittgenstein, as well as the aforementioned second generation of American pragmatists, among whom we include Hilary Putnam (d. 2016). The moderate approach, on the other hand, searches for external meaning, accepting a truth in lived context while searching for a defense of this truth in language, a method that Qāderī traces to Plato's *Cratylus*.⁶⁵

While the conservative tradition presented above seems to indicate an aversion to ideas outside what is demonstrable in a text or an author's articulation of a concept, Qāderī clarifies that the Cambridge school does not want to abandon the practice of philosophy for the sake of linguistics. Nor do they want to bypass the influence and effects of the linguistic turn. "If you read John Locke," Qāderī explains, "you would otherwise have no recourse with which to familiarize yourself with his language," whether his personal language or the cultural, historical, and social language of England.⁶⁶ Language in context therefore answers crucial questions for the Cambridge school, which opposes the dissolution of philosophy. Indeed, philosophy plays a major role for the Cambridge school, especially for Skinner, who expressed a philosophical defense of his method throughout the 1960s and 1970s. "It would serve to invest the history of ideas," Skinner writes in his groundbreaking 1969 essay, "with its own philosophical point." That is, historians should avoid both a purely textualist approach—the kind promoted by Lovejoy—and a purely contextualist approach in order to adopt a distinct method with which to study and understand the history of ideas.⁶⁷ As Bourke notes, the articulation of a "self-conscious methodology" is what distinguishes Skinner, Dunn, and Pocock from their successors like Richard Tuck and Anthony Pagden, for whom, although they contributed to historiography, "philosophical analysis of their historiographical practice has formed at most a rather marginal part of their activities."⁶⁸

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Grafton, "The History of Ideas," 7.

⁶⁴Qāderī, "Dar miyān-i muḥāfiẓahkārī va tārikhnigārī," 81.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* 8/1 (1969): 3–53, at 3–4.

⁶⁸Bourke, "Satiz bā safsāta va farjām-siyāsī," 84.

Skinner is also aware of the problems of pure historicity, which have emerged partially as a result of the historicist reaction to positivism. The task, for anti-positivist “reactionist” historians during the 1960s, was not so much to establish a set of rules for writing history, but instead to describe the methods used by historians while explaining things.⁶⁹ A set of tests for historical transformation would therefore be unacceptable. The historian’s goal is not one of looking for causality but one of “illuminating facts” to describe or explain change without a clear line of delineation between description and explanation.⁷⁰ For Skinner, these goals mitigate arbitrary claims of causality and connectedness among events and texts. The question of historicity for Bourke, on the other hand, is insufficient for explaining scholarly interest in the present relevance of past political thought; why should scholars, or anyone else for that matter, care about conceptual history? Furthermore, the prescriptive nature of the relevance of past political values as promoted specifically by Skinner, Bourke argues, results unintentionally, and in partial congruence with Qāderī’s warning, in an unsavoury blend of history and philosophy. Despite their efforts, concludes Bourke, “it therefore transpires that, as a mode of political thought, the most prominent strands of thinking within the Cambridge school tend to abandon historicity in favour of moral exhortation” because they have difficulty “reconciling their normative intuitions with an account of the trajectory of modern history.”⁷¹

Nevertheless, Bourke says that his own study of Edmund Burke embraces the same contextualist goal as does the Cambridge school, against sophistry, teleology, and prolepsis. To be sure, a corollary of the present discussion is that the Cambridge school should be understood as a strand of political tradition or perhaps political thought in its own right. And, indeed, J. G. A. Pocock has written about “historiography as a form of political thought.”⁷² In understanding the Cambridge school as political thought in its own context, Qāderī’s description of it as conservative makes better sense.

Qāderī differs from Bourke in his approach to historicity in order to explain the Cambridge school’s conservatism. For the former, the idea that an interpreter or historian alone can understand text goes against the Cambridge school’s principles.⁷³ While the Cambridge school’s opposition to such an idea is an important aspect of its conservatism, contends Qāderī, there is an alternative, yet related, possibility for a pull toward conservatism. One should consider, for instance, whether Aristotle can be classified as a practical and theoretical philosopher without the contemporaneous existence of such categories. And Qāderī believes that the Cambridge school might endorse such labeling because text is not written in a vacuum: “Text is bound to the time of its writing and publication.”⁷⁴ At the same time, the historian has a bias when interpreting and translating. That a historical

⁶⁹Quentin Skinner, “The Limits of Historical Explanations,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy* 41/157 (1966), 199–215, at 201.

⁷⁰Ibid., 202–3.

⁷¹Bourke, “Satiz bā safsaṭa va farjām-siyāsi,” 85.

⁷²J. G. A. Pocock, “Historiography as a Form of Political Thought,” *History of European Ideas* 37/1 (2011), 1–6.

⁷³Qāderī, “Dar miyān-i muḥāfiẓahkārī va tārikhnigārī,” 81.

⁷⁴Ibid.

argument might therefore inhibit the understanding of past ideas depends on the balance the historian must create between time, text, author, and their own biases. Qāderī clearly acknowledges that the Cambridge school allows a degree of freedom for philosophical practice or interpretation. But a well-defined method and rationale must be the criteria rather than prescribed genres of questions or conclusions. These concerns not only form the basis of Qāderī's argument about the value of the Cambridge school and his conservative description, but also help to demonstrate his critique of Iranian intellectual history, for which he believes a well-defined rationale is often lacking.

Echoing Gordon's critique of the Cambridge school, Shari'atī—also Qāderī's interviewer—addresses the school's limitations.⁷⁵ "Why," Shari'atī asks, "are we limited to the Cambridge reading of tradition?" Is the value of the Cambridge school for Iranians to be achieved from direct conformity with its methodology in confronting Iranian history or might adjustments be made for novel interpretations of the past?⁷⁶ He writes that the Cambridge school is valuable to Iranians for understanding history from the perspective of "us" and "them," as well as from "the self" and "the Other" in the past and at various times, places, and contexts.⁷⁷ While Shari'atī extends the Cambridge school's methodological worth for Iranians beyond national history to global history, Qāderī is more generous in his critique of the school's limitations, having presented such limitations mostly as a result of Iranian and British historians who use the school to limit diversity of thought. Shari'atī's critique instead defines the nature of the Cambridge school as inherently limiting, while undeniably useful, as Gordon also asserts.

Qāderī concludes that positivism is useful for Iranians as a structure for thinking and arguing, to mitigate subjectivity, ideally resulting in a less politicized historical inquiry. While he recognizes that "it is also possible that when placed in the control of very traditional and conservative professors, [this method] will inhibit all kinds of philosophy," a reformed positivism is useful in Iran for preventing rampant subjectivism.⁷⁸ However, beyond promoting a reformed Cambridge-style method, his genealogy of the Cambridge school with conservative elements also establishes a political position against distortions of Iranian intellectual history through unrestrained political philosophy and theory.

The death of history as ideology

Skinner has credited Friedrich Nietzsche (d. 1900) with "the view that no such concepts [as freedom, representation, democracy, and the state] can have definitions: they only have histories."⁷⁹ Accordingly, the only way to understand concepts is historically, a maxim which is at the core of Skinner's work. Qāderī's view of Nietzsche, on the other hand, reflects both Skinner's interests and Nietzsche's popularity in Iran since *Thus Spake Zarathustra's* first translation in 1948 and

⁷⁵Negin Yavari has drawn parallels between Gordon and Qāderī's critiques. See Yavari, "Introduction."

⁷⁶Shari'atī, "Qarā't-i kambrijī az andisha," 73.

⁷⁷Ibid., 73.

⁷⁸Qādirī, "Dar miyān-i muḥāfiẓahkārī va tārikhnigārī," 81-2.

⁷⁹Quentin Skinner, "Quentin Skinner: 'Concepts Only Have Histories,'" *Espaces temps*, 2004, at www.espacestemp.net/en/articles/quentin-skinner.

particularly since the 1979 Iranian Revolution.⁸⁰ But Qāderī is less generous to Nietzsche than is Skinner, undoubtedly because of how the philosopher's thought has been subsumed into ideology in Iran. Qāderī argues that Nietzsche "looks to context and presents his own deductions. But when you look at the [Cambridge] school, you see it observes context and tries to understand the context."⁸¹ The difference is, in other words, that Nietzsche interprets history through theory, which is unbound by context in its freedom to interpret any context and text. In fact, Qāderī describes Nietzsche's approach to history as an "attitude" (*negaresh*) rather than a method.⁸² The Cambridge school, on the other hand, endeavors to comprehend context without recourse to personal opinion.

Those on both ends of the political spectrum in Iran offer insight into Nietzsche's role in contemporary Iranian historiography, whether by direct reference or by allusion. Two examples are Sayyed Javād Ṭabāṭabā'ī, a Sorbonne-educated intellectual and former professor at the Faculty of Law and Political Science at the University of Tehran, and Ḥasan 'Abbāsī, an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps officer and head of the *Andīshkadeh-ye yaqīn* (Think Tank of Certitude). It is perhaps no coincidence, therefore, that Shari'ati, Qāderī's interviewer, credits the Cambridge school's rise in Iran in part to Ṭabāṭabā'ī's ideas.⁸³ Ṭabāṭabā'ī is in agreement with Qāderī that, in Iran, historiography is bereft of a philosophical foundation and that social science has a tendency toward ideology.⁸⁴ Unlike Qāderī, however, Ṭabāṭabā'ī identifies a crisis of intellectual and political decline in Iran because of the absence of Enlightenment thought and the prevalence of authoritarian tendencies that emerged four centuries ago.⁸⁵ Given their differences, it should be unsurprising that Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Qāderī's have critiqued one another publicly.⁸⁶ 'Abbāsī has also publicly antagonized Ṭabāṭabā'ī and is a proponent of Nietzsche's thought. The fundamental thrust of 'Abbāsī's attack on Ṭabāṭabā'ī is that the Muslims of fourteen centuries past, against whom Ṭabāṭabā'ī has written, are those who paved the way for the "depth" of today's Iran, exemplified by Ayatollah Khomeinī (d. 1989), Commander Qāsem Soleimānī (d. 2020), and the youth who fought in the Iran–Iraq War.⁸⁷

Ṭabāṭabā'ī has asked the following: what "conditions made modernity possible in Europe and led to its abnegation in Iran?"⁸⁸ While easily reducible to an orientalist reading of modernity, Ṭabāṭabā'ī's question reflects the idea of a paradigmatic concept of modernity that begins in Europe and spreads globally. His idea of "modern" is neither technological nor necessarily religious. It is, instead, intellectual and cultural. In this way, his thought gives context to Qāderī's approach to the

⁸⁰Hāmid Fūlādvand, "Jāziba-yi Nietzsche dar Irān-i imrūz," *Bāztāb-i andīsha* 62 (2005), at <http://ensani.ir/fa/article/94286>.

⁸¹Qāderī, "Dar miyān-i muḥāfiẓahkārī va tārikhnigārī," 81.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Shari'ati, "Qarā't-i kambrijī az andīsha," 72.

⁸⁴Mehrzad Boroujerdi and Alireza Shomali, "The Unfolding of Reason: Javad Tabataba'i's Idea of Political Decline in Iran," *Iranian Studies* 48/6 (2015), 949–65, at 950.

⁸⁵Ibid., 952–3.

⁸⁶Sayyed Javād Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Pāsukh-i Sayyed Javād Ṭabāṭabā'ī bih muntaqidān/qismat-i avval: mānifistī barā-yi Irān," *Farhang-i Imrūz*, 19 May 2014, at <http://farhangemrooz.com/news/16148>.

⁸⁷Ḥasan 'Abbāsī, "Ḥayāt-i Islām va marg-i libirālism," *Jadāl aḥsan*, n.d., at www.aparat.com/v/3wXpB.

⁸⁸Boroujerdi and Shomali, "The Unfolding of Reason," 950.

Cambridge school by showing how some strands of post-revolutionary Iranian political thought might continue to internalizing aspects of liberal Western modernity while appealing to a different kind of tradition—one that is not “Islamic.”

Nevertheless, Qāderī has critiqued on a number of occasions his erstwhile teacher, Ṭabāṭabā’ī, for using an ideological discourse through which the latter rejects opposing views instead of engaging in scholarly dialogue. Among Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s ideological positions, argues Qāderī, are ones that are not supported by historical evidence, for example attributing a national consciousness to the philosopher Ibn Sinā (d. 1037). The effect, according to Qāderī, is to aggravate a political divide within intellectual history and beyond. Additionally, Iranian readers, whom Qāderī notes lack access to reliable resources, internalize these ideological positions and popularize them.⁸⁹

Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s thought is complicated by the fact that he is considered by some an ideologue of the Iranian Revolution and by others, like ‘Abbāsī, Eurocentric. At the same time, Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s question has influenced those who have held power in Iran, such as former president Moḥammad Khātāmī (president of Iran from 1997 to 2005).⁹⁰ Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s answer to his question on modernity’s abnegation in Iran can be found in his critique of Iranian historiography, which is congruent in some ways with that of Qāderī. But Ṭabāṭabā’ī is a self-proclaimed Hegelian, a distinction that colors his advocacy for Islam’s return to “self-consciousness”; that is, to become “aware of its own identity” as it had been during its advent as a consequence of the “transmission of Greek philosophy” as opposed to its current condition as a “‘positive religion’ ... forced to withdraw into itself.”⁹¹ Iran’s era of self-conscious, secular, pluralist rationality is defined by two qualities, one of which Ṭabāṭabā’ī labels *Iranshahri*, when pre-Islamic Iranians knew the “Other” as Greeks and Arabs, accepted diversity as a bulwark against authoritarianism, and embraced secularity. The second quality was a rational understanding of Islam, inherited from Greek thought, which prevented wholesale Muslim despotism, as manifested in the Caliphate, while also serving as a therapeutic for a post-Sassanian identity crisis.⁹²

Iran’s decline, Ṭabāṭabā’ī explains, occurred after a “golden age” of Islamic public/civic life and rationality (c. tenth–thirteenth centuries). This decline occurred after a period of Seljuq-stimulated orthodoxy (c. eleventh–fourteenth centuries) and Mongol-initiated material and political rupture (c.1258), causing an eclipse of reason and a retreat of public life, and paving the way for Shī’ī absolutism.⁹³ Moments of attempted secular and rational sovereignty inspired by Enlightenment thought, as with the Constitutional Revolution (1906–11), were always incapable of penetrating the dichotomy of God as lawgiver and man as

⁸⁹“Javād-i Ṭabāṭabā’ī dar ḥalqah-ye muntaqadān va mudafī’ān: qaṣḍ-i man nivishtan-i tārikh-i mafhūm-i Irān ast,” *Tārikh-i Irānī*, 26 April 2014, at <http://tarikhirani.ir/fa/news/4256/> -جواد-طباطبای-در-حلقه-منتقدان-و-مدافعان-قصد-من-نوشتند-تاریخ-مفهوم-ایران-است

⁹⁰Boroujerdi and Shomali, “The Unfolding of Reason,” 960.

⁹¹Javad Tabatabai, “Understanding Europe: The Case of Persia,” in Furio Cerutti and Enno Rudolph, eds., *A Soul for Europe: On the Cultural and Political Identity of the Europeans. An Essay Collection, On the Making of Europe* (Sterling, VA, 2001), vol. 1, 197–212, at 200.

⁹²Boroujerdi and Shomali, “The Unfolding of Reason,” 951–2.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 951–3.

commanded; this, according to Ṭabāṭabā'ī, had been achieved in Europe with the Conciliar movement (c. fifteenth century), which placed power in an ecumenical council instead of solely with the Pope or popes.⁹⁴

In his assessment of the Cambridge school's emergence in Iran, Shari'ati describes it as a useful tool for understanding the "self" and the "Other."⁹⁵ But Shari'ati avoids overt moral exhortations—to borrow Bourke's phrase—of political values. Instead, as the Cambridge school implores, Shari'ati discerns significance in contextualizing histories, asking why certain beliefs are appealing, how historians should understand the beliefs of a people or person, and how to acknowledge the historian's role in writing history.⁹⁶ For Ṭabāṭabā'ī, the "Other" is a more culturally advanced or logical people, like Greek, Arab, or European philosophers, who bestow upon the "self" Enlightenment values and progress in accordance with a "Western" European teleological paradigm.⁹⁷ Without the guidance of an Other, Iranians have neither history nor context, for Ṭabāṭabā'ī's term for Iran's condition is "sclerotic."⁹⁸ A sclerotic condition of tradition, says Ṭabāṭabā'ī, has inhibited Iranians from understanding the true mechanisms behind the changes from the European Renaissance to modernity, causing them instead to define European intellectual change simply as "killing God to replace Him with man."⁹⁹ Yet it appears that the reasons for the "death" of Islam, in Ṭabāṭabā'ī's assessment, are paradoxically based on an inability of Iranians (and Muslims more broadly) to kill God.¹⁰⁰ Boroujerdi and Shomali have described Ṭabāṭabā'ī's understanding of Enlightenment modernity as Greek reasoning, as opposed to an instrumental rationality, which, according to Leo Strauss (d. 1973), has subverted Greek reasoning and religion.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, unlike the act of "killing," the passive death of God that Nietzsche articulated via his madman in *The Gay Science* was also a metaphor for the Enlightenment's overwhelming dominance.¹⁰²

The Nietzschean appeal is on display in 'Abbāsī's unusual approach to history as articulated in his public response to Ṭabāṭabā'ī. With a lack of formal education ('Abbāsī is reported to have only a bachelor's degree—though Skinner's highest qualification, it should be noted, is also a bachelor's), 'Abbāsī in some sense embodies a nonelite (or antielite) public and political intellectual. Nor has 'Abbāsī studied in seminary. Nevertheless, he has a following—perhaps a larger public following and acceptance than Qāderī or Ṭabāṭabā'ī. 'Abbāsī reimagines Islamic history and Islam's success through a rejection of liberalism, vis-à-vis Ṭabāṭabā'ī, and an embrace of, however shallow, some of Nietzsche's ideas, like the death of an idea or concept.

⁹⁴Ibid., 954.

⁹⁵Shari'ati, "Qarā't-i kambrijī az andisha," 72.

⁹⁶Ibid., 73.

⁹⁷Tabatabai, "Understanding Europe," 200. Ṭabāṭabā'ī tends to identify Muslim philosophers as Arab or Persian, stripping away any religious distinction as a determinant of knowledge.

⁹⁸Boroujerdi and Shomali, "The Unfolding of Reason," 953.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Javad Tabatabai, "En vérité, l'islam est mort," *L'Expansion*, 2001, at http://lexpansion.lexpress.fr/actualite-economique/en-verite-l-islam-est-mort_1351805.html.

¹⁰¹Boroujerdi and Shomali, "The Unfolding of Reason," 958.

¹⁰²Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, 1974), 181.

The act of killing liberalism in ‘Abbāsī’s estimation is either superfluous or unnecessary because liberalism has caused its own self-destruction; liberalism has died while Islam has thrived. ‘Abbāsī defines Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s concept of *Iranshahri* as one that promotes the imposition of liberalism on Iran. At the same time, ‘Abbāsī mocks, “Iran minus Islam, Iran with an Iranian identity, is the color and taste of Western liberalism.”¹⁰³ He portrays the effects of Western liberalism in the West as debauched and amoral, with a particular effect on Iran of fostering the economic policies of the late Akbar Hāshemī Rafsanjāni’s (d. 2017) followers—the Executives of Construction Party—and their connection to left-leaning intellectual magazines, such as *Siyāsatnāmeḥ* and *Mehr-nāmeḥ*, for which Ṭabāṭabā’ī has written.¹⁰⁴ But for ‘Abbāsī, the “management” (*mudīriyat*) of fourteen centuries ago—that is, the leadership of the Prophet and not of the Executives—became the leadership style of Soleimāni, Ḥasan Naṣrallah, the veterans of the Iran–Iraq War, and both supreme leaders.¹⁰⁵

‘Abbāsī asks whether it was the cause of liberalism or the project of *Iranshahri* for which the military officer Moḥsen Ḥojjajī was decapitated by ISIS in Syria 2017. For what purpose, he repeats, did Iran’s martyrs in Syria sacrifice themselves?¹⁰⁶ He answers, this was for Iran, not Islam, implying that today’s Iran promotes the values necessary for a thriving society. And thus, according to ‘Abbāsī, Western “liberalism is dead.”¹⁰⁷ It is possible, here, that he is presenting the death of a concept or idea in opposition to Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s use of death—that the brand of self-sacrifice described above supports his view. ‘Abbāsī’s notion of self-sacrifice does not promote a version of instrumental rationality—to elicit a measurable political result, to reveal something about the world, or to facilitate progress. Ḥojjajī’s sacrifice was an ethical and personal act in the service of Iran as an Islamic republic; his sacrifice is therefore opposite to the liberal death of God. ‘Abbāsī’s references to Nietzsche are not merely allusive. Nietzsche is Shi’a, he has proclaimed, without much explanation.¹⁰⁸ There is, however, another way to understand ‘Abbāsī’s distinction.

Although some Iranian intellectuals have credited Strauss’s ideas with a nativistic turn by which history is mythologized, Strauss, the German American political philosopher, retains an important position in the Iranian debate on historiography.¹⁰⁹ ‘Abbāsī’s reactionary articulation of history is not so dissimilar from—albeit not nearly as sophisticated as—Strauss’s assessment of Nietzsche’s attack on philosophical tradition. For Strauss, Nietzsche was the final Enlightenment philosopher, having recast the tradition of the Prophets and Greeks to open up new possibilities for interpretation. As Daniel Tanguay explains, Nietzsche traveled from the light beyond Plato’s cave, back down into the darkness of the present with neither the plausibility of tradition nor fixed points of references for guidance. Doing so he entered a second level of darkness. This second level was reached by

¹⁰³ Ḥasan ‘Abbāsī, “Ḥayāt-i Islām va marg-i libirālism.”

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Ḥasan ‘Abbāsī, “Tafāvut-i fuqahā’ bā falāsafa,” n.d., at www.aparat.com/v/IbOYH.

¹⁰⁹ Ghaffāriyān, “Butshikana uštūra-hā-yi mudurn-i tārikhi.”

destroying the self-evident qualities of tradition whereby questions could be posed anew.¹¹⁰ To be sure, there are various reasons for Nietzsche's political appeal in Iran. One translator writing about Nietzsche's influence in Iran attributes the popularity of his ideas among the youth after the Iran–Iraq War to the substitution of Marx and Freud with Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* in order to expose the morality of ideological systems.¹¹¹ Alternatively, another possible explanation involves the presence of an esoteric rationality; that is, accepting the existence of mysteries and the world's unknowable qualities while using a defined method, as Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240), Suhrawardī (d. 1191), and indeed Khomeinī had done.¹¹²

Although there is no evidence that 'Abbāsī is aware of Strauss's position on Nietzsche, he has nonetheless attempted to reimagine tradition to account for liberalism's failure while bolstering the narrative of the Iranian Revolution's success. Doing so requires articulating a new perspective of history—one that involves not a death of Islam but a death of the dominant historiographical bend toward liberalism. Despite its merits and philosophical importance, this method is ostensibly contra Nietzsche's maxim as conveyed by Skinner: that concepts only have histories. But the nature of political thought, of course, does not require the presentation of a historically verifiable account. Instead, political thought's arguable purpose is to transform the parameters of debate, a debate present in the pages of other intellectual forums in Iran.¹¹³

Ṭabāṭabā'ī and 'Abbāsī reflect positions on the political spectrum of historiography in Iran, namely those that advance an explicitly moral–ideological reading of history to which Qāderī was responding. His response is contextualized by, among other things, shallow allusions to Nietzsche's thought and discourse. Furthermore, Ṭabāṭabā'ī and 'Abbāsī complicate the liberal/conservative distinction by articulating ideas that might be placed in either category based on context and intention. For despite having articulated and promoted elements of a conservative tradition, Qāderī's iteration of conservatism is hardly compatible with Abbāsī's. And unlike many of their anglophone counterparts, it should be noted, Qāderī, Abbāsī, and Ṭabāṭabā'ī's political thought has political consequences in Iran.

That Nietzsche has become popular is not to argue that Iran is currently or belatedly experiencing a Western trajectory of historiography as experienced in Europe. Instead, the Iranian Revolution engendered new ways of thinking and questioning, departing from dominant global norms. Hence the emergence of Qāderī and his peers' reformed approaches to the Cambridge school as well as their caveats involving Islamic text and context. The Cambridge school, in particular Skinner's method, is not without its problems beyond the limitations on philosophical inquiry addressed by Qāderī. For it should be noted that Skinner is unconcerned

¹¹⁰Daniel Tanguay, *Leo Strauss: An Intellectual Biography*, trans. Christopher Nadon (New Haven, 2007), 44–5.

¹¹¹Fülādvand, "Jāziba-yi Nietzsche dar Irān-i imrūz."

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³For another exploration of how Skinner's method can mitigate ideological historiography in Iran see Muḥammad-Javād Ghulāmriżā-Kāshī, "Farākhān-i Iskinār bih maydān-i manāz'a Irānī," *Mihrnāma* 37 (2014), 269–70. See also Nachman, "Quentin Skinner beh Fārsī."

with religious text and has expressed aversion to its study.¹¹⁴ Paradoxically, however, the Cambridge school's approach is perhaps best suited to the study of Islamic history, as noted by Qāderī, because it accepts unanswerable questions without overtly favoring an ideology. A lack of favoritism is not an effort to preserve neutrality among political enemies but, as addressed above, it is an effort to understand context and authorial intention.

A reformed Skinnerian method has recently been used to understand how revolutionary and post-revolutionary ideologies interacted with Islamic texts. The influential scholar and ally of Abbāsī, Moḥammad-Taqī Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī (b. 1935), places strict philosophical and practical limitations on concepts like liberty, democracy, and human rights in the context of his view of Islam and state, as well as the Iranian Revolution. Moslem, who has categorized Iranian political factions, describes Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī as an "ultra-conservative" member of the clergy, noting, with a quote from Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī himself, that "freedom is not absolute and humans have conditional freedom. We must accept all the teachings of Islam without questioning them."¹¹⁵ But a 2018 journal article published in Iran uses Skinner's method to contextualize Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī's treatment of concepts like liberty, human rights, and democracy, compared with other revolutionaries. To be sure, this is hardly the first exploration of such concepts in Iranian intellectual history. Ahmad Hashemi, for example, has published a study in English with a contextual approach to the concept of freedom during the Constitutional Revolution in which he critiques Skinner for the near impossibility of reconstructing authorial intention.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, the article on Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī fits within a historical turn in Iran toward Qāderī's more conservative approach to intellectual history.

The article's authors, Dawlat-Ābādī and Mūsawī, argue that the success of the Iranian Revolution changed the world with political Islam's entrance into the arena of political practice. A subsequent conflict emerged, however, between philosophical and practical transformations. This conflict highlighted the need for new approaches to textual interpretation. Some of these new methods and approaches to jurisprudence and Islam's role in politics, including those which Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī encouraged, emphasized methods for protecting the place of religion in society and politics with the view of attaining worldly and divine felicity.¹¹⁷ To attain this felicity, according to Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī, Islam, as articulated only in the Qur'an and Hadith, must be realized in every dimension of politics, society, jurisprudence, and economics, the result of which is the expansion of religion's domain along with the freedom for specific political opinions in the context of democracy, liberty, and human rights.¹¹⁸ This position, it should be noted, is more restrictive than that of Khomeinī, who had not limited the source of legal opinions to the Qur'an and Hadith. What, however, the authors ask, "is the relationship between Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī's interpretation of religion and concepts like" those oft-labelled

¹¹⁴Teresa Bejan, "Quentin Skinner: The Art of Theory Interview (2011)," *The Art of Theory*, at www.uncanonical.net/skinner. See also Nachman, "Quentin Skinner beh Fārsī."

¹¹⁵Moslem, *Factional Politics*, 261–2.

¹¹⁶Ahmad Hashemi, *Rival Conceptions of Freedom in Modern Iran: An Intellectual History of the Constitutional Revolution* (Abingdon, 2019), 14–15.

¹¹⁷Dawlat-Ābādī and Mūsawī, "Ta'aṣīr-sanjī-yi tafsīr-i dīn," 1.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 2.

secular ones above?¹¹⁹ Keeping in mind Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī's position as a jurist in a political role, Skinner's method, argue the authors, is best equipped to attend to how time, place, and ideology have affected Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī's views.¹²⁰

The success and formation of Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī's ideology, according to the authors, is contextualized by its competition with and the subsequent failure of two currents of revolutionary thought in Iran. The Freedom Movement sought to expand the concept of liberty beyond jurisprudential limits while promoting a diversity of interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith. In other words, they promoted the idea that a number of ideologies exist in the Qur'an and Hadith. This orientation, according to Dawlat-Ābādī and Mūsawī, is therefore conducive to a modernist interpretation of liberty. The other current included many leftist Muslims. They

manifested along with 'Alī Sharī'atī (d. 1977), who did not declare the existence of [an] ideology in Islam, the Qur'an, or Sunna, or the necessity to attain [ideology], but who nevertheless attempted to construct a singular ideology, through a specific interpretation and organization from which Qur'anic and Sunnaic meaning was acquired for social and political combat against the Pahlavi regime ... Islam as such is a combatant religion and the Prophet's goal had been to eradicate social, political, and economic inequalities.¹²¹

Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī, as the authors explain, during the two decades prior to the Revolution, saw in Marxism and dialectical materialism's popularity a threat to the Muslim youth and revolutionary clergy. In a seminary meeting with other clerics and members of Khomeinī's movement, Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī described his concerns and solutions to the materialist threat to Islam and its distortion of religious knowledge. He described the situation as one in which a group like the Mojāhedīn-i khalq takes ideas from Islam and Marxism, despite the differences between the two, to combat injustice and embrace sacrifice. In order to oppose the dangers of such intellectual intermingling (*iltiqā'i*), he advocated for a confrontation with practicing, pious Muslims who might be inclined toward Marxism and dialectical materialism.¹²² Beyond a clear alternative to and conflict with Marxist and liberal elements, the authors frame Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī's opposition as an effort to protect (conserve?) authority over knowledge and from whom social/political change can come.

Alternatively, Mehdī Bāzārgān (d. 1995), a leader of the Freedom Movement, defined liberty and rights according to the separation of religion from politics that secures an autonomous space for liberty and rights. To be sure, he thought religion applicable to all human affairs, including politics and ethics, and had opposed their intrusion in religion. Nevertheless, Bāzārgān accepted Western political achievements and a liberal interpretation of Muslim liberty and authority. He defined liberty as contingent not on scholarly interpretation of the Qur'an and

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Ibid., 8.

¹²²Ibid., 9–10.

Hadith but on humanity's submission to divine will, found in the Shahada; that is, "liberty and authority is a privilege that God has decreed for human beings from the first day" when one declares that "there is no god but God." Doing so, Bāzargān believed, one attests to the freedom of choice given to man by God; no regime has the right to restrict or exploit such freedom.¹²³ But this was a broad and baseless interpretation according to Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī.

Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī staunchly opposed interpreting Islam in order to expand definitions of liberty and rights. He was not opposed to liberty or rights as concepts per se, but instead to the way in which Bāzargān and some of his ideological allies defined these concepts, despite their references to the Qur'an and Hadith. Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī preferred instead the authority of Islamic injunctions as interpreted by scholars in determining the circumscription of rights.¹²⁴ His jurisprudential approach was based on the assertion that human existence occurs beyond a material world, in a nonmaterial and more permanent realm for which religion determines a limited definition of liberty and governance.¹²⁵ But liberty, according to Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī, is not a monolithic concept; it is a term, he notes, under which many different meanings exist, making it difficult to find a common denominator. Where rights and morals are separate in some political visions, an Islamic government, as Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī understood it, binds the two.¹²⁶ In this sense, rights and duties are inseparable moral imperatives which contribute to an Islamic republican orientation of liberty and rights as legal categories. In turn, these legal categories are limited to and dependent on the discernment of Iran's jurists and scholars in the post-revolutionary era.¹²⁷

Indeed, the narrative and arguments in Dawlat-Ābādī and Mūsawī's study are debatable. Nevertheless, Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī's thought—often ignored in favour of more popular, dynamic, and influential revolutionaries—represents an alternative to the various ideologies of his era, as well as the diversity of thought among revolutionaries. Against the backdrop of diversity, his thought helps to contextualize how some revolutionaries defined liberty and rights to defend their politics. Dawlat-Ābādī and Mūsawī's study also demonstrates how contemporary historians are themselves contextualized by debates on methodology and how history can be mobilized for political purposes, which, in turn, directly affects its popular perception.

The Skinnerian approach therefore offers an alternative not only to Ṭabāṭabā'ī's and 'Abbāsī's historical visions but also to orientalist scholars of Islam who have also incorporated elements of positivism into their methodologies. The "revisionist school" of Islamic history, or, as Fred Donner has labeled it, the "skeptical approach," as an example, has enjoyed recent debate among Iranian intellectuals.¹²⁸ Patricia Crone (d. 2015), the late professor of Islamic history at Princeton University who

¹²³Ibid., 11.

¹²⁴Ibid., 12.

¹²⁵Ibid., 21.

¹²⁶Ibid., 27.

¹²⁷Ibid., 31.

¹²⁸For Ṭabāṭabā'ī's role in the Iranian debate over Crone see Muḥammad-Riḍa Murādi-Ṭādi, "Naysavarān: Krūnist-hā 'alayh-i nazariya-yi Irān," *Farhang-i Imrūz*, 18 Dec. 2017, at <http://farhangem-rooz.com/news/52780>. For a posthumous appraisal of Crone's work see 'Iṣṣām 'Abdū, "Patricia Crone va ta'aṣir-i ravish-i aū bar muṭāla'āt-i islāmi: gharūb-i ravish-i bāznigarist-hā," *Farhang-i Imrūz*, 4 Nov.

arguably epitomizes the approach as Donner describes it, contended that “the bulk of” early Islamic historiography “is debris of an obliterated past,” “whether one approaches [it] from the angle of the religious or the tribal tradition.”¹²⁹ Despite the novel but currently unpopular method found in her and Michael Cook’s book *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (1977), they were able neither to grapple with questions for which textual or physical evidence was absent nor to contextualize narratives which served as allegory or metaphor. This is to say that they were unable to “see things [the author’s] way.”

Conclusion

What, if any, are the practical—as opposed to theoretical—political consequences of Qāderī’s idea of conservative historiography? In other words, can methodology have consequences for the practice of politics, for example in parliament and elections, beyond theoretical debate? Despite Skinner’s refusal to distinguish between practice and theory, and notwithstanding Qāderī’s appropriation of Skinner, Qāderī in 2020 has stated that politics is no longer possible in Iran because of rampant ideology.¹³⁰ But in presenting a genealogy of the Cambridge school as a conservative tradition, Qāderī has begun to establish a political identity for a self-proclaimed neutral method. In other words, he has attempted to craft a conservative tradition of thought against other, less restrictive ones, ones which have been used to mediate Iranian intellectual history through European thought. The makings of a novel conservative intellectual tradition might therefore be explained as paradoxically a turn toward Cambridge-style history and away from European mediation to confront challenges that the original Cambridge theoreticians had not foreseen. Whether such a turn will have political consequences outside discussions on Iranian history depends on future responses and debates. Qāderī, however, expressed pessimism at the end of his *Farhang Emrooz* interview, lamenting the lack of quality translations in Iran of thinkers from various schools and methods; more and better translations are the antidote to harmful subjectivity and promote further debate.¹³¹ Nevertheless, a parallel or greater lacuna exists in English-language scholarship on Iran at the expense of all scholars and students of history, for the dialogue discussed in this article is one-sided—it is on the Iranian side, in this case, where the limits of historiography are being challenged.

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2018, at <http://farhangemrooz.com/news/56949>; Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginning of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton, 1998), 20–21.

¹²⁹Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses* (Cambridge, 1980), 10, cited in Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 20.

¹³⁰Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 1, *Regarding Method* (Cambridge, 2002), 7; Anadolu Agency, “Rābiṭa-yi idī’ulūjī bā mushkilāt-i sākhtāri-yi Irān,” 30 March 2020, at shorturl.at/hxTY3.

¹³¹Qādirī, “Dar miyān-i muḥāfizhākārī va tārikhniḡārī,” 82.

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