

4 Nizāmī's Cosmographic Vision and Alexander in Search of the Fountain of Life

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Nizāmī's *Iskandar Nāma* (ca. 1194) is probably a highlight of the literary tradition of the *Alexander Romance*. This tradition had produced a great number of works in many languages throughout the Eurasian continent, before Nizāmī wrote his *mathnavī*. Across the geographical, temporal and cultural boundaries, the *Alexander Romance* appears to be a narrative cycle with a prominent cosmographic character: the explorations and conquests of the first historical *kosmokrátor* formed an ideal track for continuously renewed and updated geographic and ethnographic information about the world, to be presented to sovereigns aspiring to become the 'second Alexander'. Nizāmī states this at the end of the *Iqbāl Nāma*, the second part of his *Iskandar Nāma*:

جز این نامه نغز را بار نیست	در آن بزم کاشوب را کار نیست
رصد بندی کوه و دریا کند	بدان تا جهان را تماشا کند
گهی بر حبش ترکناز آورد	گهی تاختن در طراز آورد
جهان ملک آفاش آورده پیش	نشسته جهانجوی برجای خویش

(IN41, 21-24)

*In that pleasant symposium this book has its place, not elsewhere:
For gazing through it at the world, and drawing the maps of mountains and seas,
And now riding up to Tirāz, now raiding Ethiopia's land,
Thus the world offered to the one who longs for world dominion,
sitting still, the rule of its own horizons.*

The authority of such a work was based primarily on familiarity with the former tradition. Nizāmī was a great erudite, as he proudly declares at the beginning of the *Sharaf Nāma*, the first volume of his *Alexandreid*:

ندیدم نگاریده در یک نور	اثرهای آن شاه آفاق گرد
به هر نسختی در پرانده بود	سخنها که چون گنج آگنده بود
برو بستم از نظم پیرایه ها	ز هر نسخه برداشتم مایه ها
یهودی و نصرانی و پهلوی	زیادت ز تاریخهای نوی
ز هر پوست پرداختم مغز او	گزیدم ز هر نامه ای نغز او

(SN10,17-21)

*Not in one roll alone I saw the exploits of this king explorer:
 The words had flowered like a treasure, and were scattered in every
 manuscript.
 And from ev'ry manuscript I gathered the jewels, adding to them
 the ornament of poetry.
 A wealth of Koranic, Hebrew, Christian and Pahlavi stories:
 From each book I picked out its own grace, grasping the pith from
 ev'ry skin.*

More particularly, Nizāmī did a lot of research on a very famous episode of the alexandrine saga: the expedition into the Land of Darkness in search of the Fountain of Life. This narrative closes the *Sharaf Nāma* and from a wide-ranging inquiry into this episode,¹ Nizāmī's version appears to be the *textus amplior* of this literary tradition with over 250 verses recounting Alexander's learning about the Fountain of Life and the dark land where it lies and his decision to search for it. They detail the features of that side of the world, the guides and the stratagems used to explore it, the meetings in the darkness, the detection and loss of the Fountain and finally Alexander's return home and the moral considerations on the episode. The episode's thematic and symbolic complexity repeatedly forces Nizāmī to relate the same feature according to several different literary traditions, despite his usual clarity.² With regard to the cosmographic essence of the episode, which is what I would like to focus on here, Nizāmī's story is one of those containing the most detailed indications.

Having freed Queen Nūshāba from the Rūs, Alexander is resting in his camp in the lands north of the Caucasus. During a symposium, an old man informs him of the existence of the Fountain of Life, behind "a veil whose name is Darkness", "under the North Pole". And he adds that "From us to that land, the way is short".

The description of the entrance into the Darkness (ظلمات *zulmāt*) contains important naturalistic details. In the first verses, Nizāmī describes Alexander's astonishment as, going northwards, he observes the rapid changes in the sun's course. At the Polar Arctic Circle, the height of the sun over the horizon drops day by day in the passage from summer to winter, whilst it rises during the period from the winter solstice to the summer solstice. Then the poet mentions a specific feature of the sun's transit at the Polar Arctic Circle: at the winter solstice, the sun remains twenty-four hours under the horizon, except an instant at noon, when it rises and immediately (به یک لحظه زود) *bi yak lahza-i zūd*³ sets to the south. Crossing this land in winter-time, for many hours a day the sun is visible only as "a reflection in the water" (خیالی در آب) *khiyālī dar āb*.⁴ But Alexander's soldiers continue to advance holding their flags, marching beyond the circle, into a land where the darkness grows, until even the pale "glimmer vanishes". No light appears anymore from the end of the way.

These detailed indications are confirmed in many key passages of Arabic and Persian texts dealing with the Alexandrine legend. As a main example, the Arabic historian Tabarī (tenth century) reports that Alexander, after the conquest of India, China and Tibet,

*penetrated into the Darkness, located beside the North Pole and the southern sun (الشمس الجنوبيه al-shams al-junūbiyya), together with four hundred men, looking for the Fountain of Eternity, and he spent eighteen days there.*⁵

The northern direction of the expedition into the Darkness has been alluded to in several older texts of the alexandrine tradition. In the famous Syriac *Homely*, attributed to Jacob of Sarugh, but recognized as a text of the first half of the seventh century, Alexander leads his army northwards, until he reaches the Land of Darkness.⁶ In a less explicit form, the *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ancestor of the *Alexander Romance*, gives the indication which is at the origin of the literary tradition of the episode. Alexander's expedition is here marked by the direction *katá tén 'ámaxan tou pólou* ("along the Polar constellation", PC, II 32). This is repeated as they come out of the Darkness (*katá tén 'ámaxan tón astéron*, PC, II 40). That land at "the end of the world" is in a region "where the sun never shines" (PC, II, 39).⁷

A comparative analysis enables us to pinpoint the precise geographical location of the Land of Darkness in the ancient and medieval cosmographic culture. This corrects the generally accepted view of an unknown land, sometimes subterranean and infernal. A substantial contribution, as we have seen, has been made by Nizāmī in his masterful *mathnavī*.

The classical naturalistic tradition contains many notions concerning the northern regions. Pliny says that it is a *pars mundi damnata a rerum natura et densa mersa caligine*.⁸ The latin term *caligo* has a double meaning of 'darkness' and 'fog', which expresses the double character of darkness in the arctic region. Beside the winter darkness, due to the relation between the Earth and the Sun, there was a summer darkness, of which we can find a precise awareness in the Arabic-Persian cosmographic alexandrine tradition. In a particular Persian collection of *Qisas al-anbya*, of which a manuscript is conserved in the British Library, the chapter devoted to Dhu'l-Qarnayn, the Double-Horned Alexander of the Islamic tradition, contains some original features. Informed of the existence of the Fountain of Life, Alexander moves towards the Darkness: "This was a region of rising vapours. It was not a nightly darkness, but like that of vapour coming out from a well."⁹ That is exactly the appearance of the sub-arctic and arctic regions, especially during the summer, and is caused by the condensation of clouds or the partial melting of ice. Light becomes veiled, orientation is difficult, and great are the risks for travellers and sailors.

A lot of fragmentary information on the Northern lands, possibly due to ancient explorers, is scattered through various texts, composing this mysterious and hostile image of the Land of Darkness. In the Eurasian Continent, this zone covers a wide area, going from Iceland to the Scandinavian peninsula, from the German to the northern Russian regions, all the way to the edge of Siberia. This area was partly known to medieval Muslim geographers, as is witnessed by the section dedicated to the Seventh Climate in the *Geography* of al-Idrīsī, working at the Sicilian court of the Norman king Ruggero II.¹⁰

In Nizāmī's account, the camp from which Alexander moves towards the Darkness is in the land of Bulgar, which he reached after the land of the Rūs. In the Arabic-Persian tradition, the name Bulgar refers to the region between the rivers Volga and Kama and south to their confluence, around the 55° parallel. According to a widespread legend, mentioned by Nizāmī himself, the local chiefs are Alexander's descendants. This geographical indication does not seem to correspond to any classical or European medieval text on Alexander. The obvious reason being that neither the historical Alexander, nor his main successors, the Roman and the Byzantine Emperors, ever sent their legions so far North on that side of the world, which was too distant from their centre of action. In fact, these regions were explored by early califal envoys, such as the famous Ibn Fadlān who reached the land of Bulgar in 921 and wrote a vast report on it.¹¹

This route to the Darkness is found in other Arabic and Persian alexandrine narratives, such as Amīr Khusraw's *A'īna-yi Iskandarī*, or in the singular *Million* of Marco Polo, whose connection to Muslim sources is unanimously recognised today. Speaking of the region of the northern Tartars, Polo says that it is "quite impassable for horses, for it abounds greatly in lakes and springs, and hence there is so much ice as well as mud and mire, that horses cannot travel over it." This land can be crossed with sledges drawn by big dogs. "Still further north, Polo continues, [...] there is a region which bears the name of Darkness, because neither sun, nor moon nor stars appear, but it is always as dark as with us in the twilight. The people have no king of their own, nor are they subject to any foreigner, and live like beasts."¹²

Attracted by this Uralian route to the Darkness, of which he had fresh accounts, Nizāmī ignores certain details presented by Firdawsī, whom he claims as his main source. Actually, Firdawsī's details seem to point to a different geographical approach to the dark, northern land. In the *Shāh Nāma*, Alexander explores the North and reaches a large settlement inhabited by "powerful men [...], tawny-haired and with pale faces, all ready and equipped for war and battle."¹³ These features are present in other Muslim texts. Al-Mas'ūdī reports that the peoples of the northern quadrant, such as the Slavs and the Franks, live in regions covered by snow and ice. They

“have powerful bodies, rude behaviour, scarce understanding, and rough language.”¹⁴

The mention of the names of the Slavs and the Franks suggests that this information was not originally Muslim, but derived from European sources. We find many antecedents in classical ancient works, such as the Hippocratic treatise on *Airs, Waters and Places* (ca. 430 BC), the Vitruvian treatise *On Architecture* (first century BC: vi,1) and Ptolemy's geographical work (second century AD).¹⁵ It is remarkable that an almost perfect correspondence to Firdawsī's description is found in Tacitus's *Germany*. For the Roman historian, German people were *Truces et caerulei oculi, rutilae comae, magna corpora et tantum ad impetum valida*.¹⁶

Therefore, two different possible geographical locations emerge from the Arabic-Persian tradition of the *Alexander Romance* for the gateway region to the Darkness. The Uralian route is documented in relatively recent sources, mainly by Muslim travellers; it illustrates how the narratives were constantly updated with new cosmographic information. The German route derives from more ancient sources, through a long literary tradition which we can only partially reconstruct; it shows the secular endurance of textual transmission.

Thanks to the wide range of his erudite readings, Nizāmī was aware that the Land of Darkness could also be reached by sea: “in one direction, the darkness concealed the edge; the deep sea closed the way in the other”.^{16a} According to the Arabic cosmographer al-Dimashqī: “In the North, the Western Sea bears the name of Sea of Darkness, or Northern Black Sea, because the vapours which rise there, are never dissolved by the sun.”¹⁷ The oceanic journey, up to the Northern edge, was the route chosen by the sailor and scientist Pytheas of Marseille in the fourth century BC. On his return, he wrote an important treatise entitled *On the Ocean*, which partially survives in the numerous fragments quoted in later authors. Pytheas left the Mediterranean, passing through the Pillars of Hercules. Then he sailed along the coast of Iberia and Gaul, circumnavigated Britain, pushed as far as the isle which he named Thule, and finally explored the Northern Sea (and maybe the Baltic), before coming back by the same route.¹⁸ He relates that in Thule, the extreme edge of the world, there is no night during the summer solstice, whilst at the winter solstice there is no daylight.¹⁹ In these Northern lands, “the local barbarians showed him the resting place of the sun, the place where it overnights.”²⁰ In the *Shāh Nāma*, the tawny-haired people described by Firdawsī, indicate to Alexander the sea-place where the sun sets. This is further evidence of the (of course, indirect) dependence of Firdawsī's account on an ultimately classical literary tradition. These Northern lands are the place in the *Qur'an* where Dhu'l-Qarnayn arrives and “there he found a people” (XVIII, 85-8). It is therefore the place of a wonderful Northern sunset, not Western, as is usually indicated.²¹

According to Pytheas, one day of sailing away from Thule, there is the solid sea (*mare concretum*)²²: “neither real earth, nor sea, nor air, but a mixture of all these different elements which resembles a sea lung, in which earth, sea and all the elements are suspended: it is something which keeps the elements joined, but it is not possible to pass or sail through it.”²³ This *mare concretum* is probably the ice pack of the arctic regions, which partially thaws in summer, producing a slush of ice, water and fog, very dangerous for the ships.²⁴ Ptolemy situated Thule at the Northern latitude of 63°. According to the tradition, Pytheas claimed that he had thus reached “the edge of the world.”²⁵ This classical cosmographic tradition was renowned in the Muslim world, and it is exactly reported by the Persian cosmographer Hamadānī, for example.²⁶

According to an authoritative theory, Pytheas could have been Alexander’s envoy, exploring the northern lands, which Alexander planned to conquer.²⁷ Though this theory is not unanimously accepted, it is known that Alexander was interested in exploring the Ocean surrounding the Earth and, as Arrianus relates, that he entrusted a certain Heraclides with the task of verifying whether the Caspian Sea was a gulf of the Northern Ocean.²⁸ In the ancient geographical concept, the Tanais (Don) was the separation line between Europe and Asia. Its sources were in the Rhipaeen Mountain range, and it followed the longitude down to Lake Maeotis (Azov Sea). Between the Rhipaeen range and the Ocean there was a strip of land sometimes described as very narrow. This strip ended at the straits where the Caspian Sea flowed into the Ocean.²⁹

Although Alexander was never able to reach the arctic land, Pytheas’s information on the Northern regions was used as propaganda by many historians. The North, the edge of the world, had to be included into the range of Alexander’s conquests, in order to complete the myth of the *kosmokrator*. Part of the oriental exploits of Alexander were consciously transferred in the North: the river Iaxartes was sometimes renamed ‘Tanais’, the Paropamisus reached by Alexander was named ‘Caucasus’. Alexander became thus a real successor to Heracles and the Argonauts.³⁰ Strabo already denounced this operation.³¹ In his *Geography*, Ptolemy³² states that Alexander, during his expedition to the Tanais, built the altars which marked the edge of his travels: the latitude is indicated as 63°57’, corresponding to that of Pytheas’s Thule.³³

This is likely to be the geographical tangle at the origin of the legend of the expedition into the Darkness, which was reworked into a wide range of texts belonging to the tradition of the *Alexander Romance*.

This Pythean and Alexandrine geography remained a constant pattern also for the true heirs of Alexander. The roman legions consolidated the knowledge of the Atlantic Ocean, sailing up to the British Islands, and at the same time refined the exploration of the Northern coast of Europe, proceeding along the rivers Rhine and Elbe. Amongst their aims, there was

always to ascertain the possibility of circumnavigation. They hoped to discover the Caspian Straits, a place of such significance that it earned the name of 'Pillars of Hercules'.³⁴ Concerning an expedition of Drusus Germanicus along the Rhine, during the empire of Augustus, Tacitus observes "We tried to explore the Ocean from that side: and they said that there were the Pillars of Hercules, [...] but the Ocean opposed (*obstitit Oceanus*) the investigation on itself and on Hercules."³⁵ The possibility of a water route between the Caspian Sea and the Ocean was a matter of evident strategic importance.

The Persian cosmographer Hamadānī gives a very important account: "I read in the *Tārīkh-i Rūm* that Alexander reached the edge of the North and saw an immense sea. He aimed to cross it but his army did not allow him to." Once on the farthest coast, Alexander sent a soldier to gather information. He returned saying that "beyond here there's no way."³⁶ The Persian expression بیش از این راه نیست *bīsh az īn rāh nīst* perfectly matches the famous *Nec plus ultra* on the western Pillars of Hercules³⁷: the same message was evidently repeated on these presumed northern Pillars.

These Northern straits, which seem to be the hub of ancient Northern explorations, offer a new hypothesis for solving the geographical enigma constituted by the expression مجمع البحرين *majma' al-bahrayn* (*between the two seas*). This expression is used in the *Qur'an* in a passage which, although jumbling Moses and Alexander, is almost unanimously recognized by the first Muslim commentators and by modern scholars alike, as connected with the Alexandrine legend of the Fountain of Life. At the end of the nineteenth century, several scholars already connected this *majma' al-bahrayn* with a leg of Alexander's journey, especially reported in the seventh-century Syriac *Christian Legend of Alexander*.³⁸ In my opinion, the commonly proposed identifications as Gibraltar and Suez,³⁹ are readily corrected by the one proposed here, concerning the presumed Caspian Straits, because this is in perfect accord with the comographic context (Northern, as we have seen), in which the legend of the Fountain originated. In the Syriac *Christian Legend*, Alexander moves from Egypt crossing "the eleven bright seas" (which means the 'internal' seas). At the end of the journey, a narrow strip of land (ten miles) separates him from the surrounding water, described as foetid and dark. Though advised against it, Alexander tries to cross this Ocean, but he fails: the water is not navigable, and many soldiers are killed by its miasmas. In the text, wise men had told Alexander that the Ocean "would not give way";⁴⁰ *Obstitit Oceanus*, Tacitus had said about Drusus's aforementioned expedition.⁴¹

In the already mentioned Syriac *Homely*, connected to the *Christian Legend*, we witness the same scene. After having seen the miasmas, probably the suffocating fogs emanating from the Pythean sea lung, Alexander tries another route to reach the Darkness, where he wants to search for the Fountain of Life.⁴²

The cosmographical reconnaissance of the arctic region was a main feature of universal imperial policy. Notwithstanding the continuous contribution of newly updated geographical information, many notions never disappeared and were transmitted as fossilised literary traditions. Ptolemy's *Geography*, the main base of Muslim geographical knowledge, was already aware that the Caspian was a closed sea, but nevertheless the *majma' al-bahrayn* crossed cultural and linguistic barriers, posing a lot of cosmographical questions, which resulted in various philosophical and mystical interpretations.

Nizāmī doesn't allude to this aspect of the expedition, nor does he mention the *majmo' al-bahrayn*. However, as we have seen, his precise and erudite text provides a fundamental help in illuminating the ancient cosmographical context. But in Nizāmī's story, following the tradition on Alexander's journey in the Darkness, the centre of the action is the search for the Fountain of Life, which is tied in the Muslim tradition to the mysterious figure of Khizr (خضر).⁴³

With regard to the essence of the Fountain, Nizāmī's wonderful description is also extremely precise:

چو سیمی که پالاید از ناف سنگ	پدید آمد آن چشمه سیم رنگ
وگر بود هم چشمه نور بود	نه چشمه که آن زین سخن دور بود
چنان بود اگر صبح باشد پگاه	ستاره چگونه بود صبحگاه
چنان بود اگر مه به افزون بود	به شب ماه ناکاسته چون بود
چو سیماب بردست مفلوج پیر	ز جنبش نبد یکدم آرامگیر
چه ماندگی سازم از جوهرش	ندانم که از پاکی پیکارش
هم آتش توان خواند یعنی هم آب	نیاید ز هر جوهر آن نور و تاب

(SN60, 23-9)

That fountain appeared like silver, like a silver stream which strains from the middle of the rock.

Not a fountain – which is far from this speech – but if, verily, it were, – it was a fountain of light.

How is the star in the morning-time? As the morning star is in the morning, – even so it was.

How is the undiminished moon at night? So it was that it was greater than the moon.

As to motion, not a moment was it ease-taker, like mercury in the hand of the paralytic old man.

On account of the purity of its nature, I know not what comparison I may make of its form.

*Not from every jewel come that light and luminosity; one can call it fire, but also water.*⁴⁴

After a purifying bath, Khizr:

وزو خورد چندانکه بر کار شد حیات ابد را سزاوار شد
(SN60,32)

Drank of it as much as befitted: and became fit for eternal life.

This description may be compared to a very interesting gloss transmitted in Arabic and Persian texts, particularly those pertaining the genre of *Qisas al-anbya*. So far, I have not been able to find a correspondence for this gloss in any other text of the alexandrine tradition. In reference to the Fountain of Life, it states that “The water of that Fountain is whiter than milk, colder than ice, sweeter than honey”.⁴⁵ Put in parallel with Nizāmī’s colourful description, the interpretation of the gloss becomes more straightforward. The arctic landscape is actually characterized by the presence of the ice-pack. Usually solid during the winter (*mare coagulatum*), in summer the ice-pack partly melts. On its surface numerous small pools of freshwater appear. The melting of smaller and larger glaciers causes springs and fountains to emerge from cracks produced in the rocks. In the regions situated slightly south of the Polar Circle, this phenomenon may endure throughout the year. This trickling water is precious sweet freshwater (*āb-i shīrīn*) cold as melting ice, and of white colour, like milk.⁴⁶

In Nizāmī’s story, Alexander ponders upon that lost Fountain springing from the rock:

چو چشمه ز خورشید شد خوشگوار چرا زیر سایه شد آن چشمه سار
بلی چشمه را سایه بهتر ز گرد کزان هست شوریده زین هست سرد
(SN60, 64-5)

Since the fountain became pleasant-tasting through the sun, why went that fountain beneath the shade?

Yes, for the fountain the shade is better than the sun, because that is who blends, and this is who cools.

Thus the Fountain of Life might be yet another fossil of ancient accounts of Northern explorations: for those travelling in the salted sea or through muddy lands, the Fountain of Life represented survival rather than immortality.

The theme of the Fountain of Life has taken numerous symbolic meanings. Nizāmī, who consulted a great number of sources, gives two other versions of the Fountain: one which he defines as Rūmī, the other as Arabic. He may be uncertain about the meaning of this Fountain, but there is no doubt that his whole version of the episode, the wonderful result of a long and articulate course of indirect and partially unconscious literary

transmission, plays a prominent role in the cosmographical inquiry described here.

In any case, the real immortality, which Alexander sought to attain so unsuccessfully in the Darkness, is that of the exploration travels and their accounts. In the third version of the Fountain, the Arabic one, Nizāmī remarks that after drinking the water, Khizr and his companion Ilyās move away from the rest of the army. They devote their immortal life to protecting travellers, one over terrestrial, the other over sea routes.

Notes

- 1 Casari (2003), Casari (2005) and Casari (2006) detail aspects of my PhD research on this topic.
- 2 SN59 and SN60,1157-1166; Nizami-Sarvatyan (1368) 509-25; Nizami-Bürgel (1991) 369-87.
- 3 Nizami-Sarvatyan (1368) 511.
- 4 Nizami-Sarvatyan (1368) 511.
- 5 Tabari-de Goeje (1881-82) 701.
- 6 Reinink (1983) I, 36-7, 40-1 and II, 40-1, 44-5.
- 7 Engelmann (1963) 306-15.
- 8 Pliny (1961) IV,12.
- 9 *Qisas al-anbiya*: Ms. I. O. 2028 British Library in London, ff. 170r-176r: *Majlis si u-duvum dar zikr-i Dhu'l-Qarnayn*, 174v.
- 10 Idrisi (1970-84) 943-63.
- 11 Hrbeek (1960).
- 12 Yule (1921) 479-86.
- 13 Firdawsi-Mohl (1838-78) 212-21.
- 14 Mas'udi (1965) 23-4.
- 15 De Anna (1994) 17-37.
- 16 Tacitus (1970) *Germany*, IV, 2.
- 16a Nizami-Sarvatyan (1368) 512.
- 17 Dimashqi (1874) 197.
- 18 Mette (1952), Bianchetti (1998).
- 19 Reported by Pliny (1961) IV, 104.
- 20 Cosmas Indicopleustes (1968-73) II, 80.
- 21 Casari (2005).
- 22 Pliny (1961) IV, 104.
- 23 Strabo (1931) II, 4, 1.
- 24 Nansen (1911) 67; Bianchetti (1998), 164-7.
- 25 Strabo (1931) II, 4, 2. For the complete Pythean fragments: Mette (1952), Bianchetti (1998).
- 26 Hamadani (1375) 349.
- 27 Dion (1977) 175-83.
- 28 Arrian (1976) VII, 16, 2. Tarn (1950) II, 5-15; Daffinà (1968) 373-4.
- 29 Bunbury (1959) II, fig. III (front of p. 238: Map of the world according to Strabo), X (front of p. 660: Map of the world according to Erathosthenes); Bianchetti (1998) 31-2.
- 30 Bunbury (1959) I, 19-30.
- 31 Strabo (1931) *Geography*, XI, 7, 4
- 32 Ptolemy (1932) III, 5, 12.
- 33 Bianchetti (1998) 34-6.

- 34 Dion (1977) 216-22; Nicolet (1988) 100-1; 258-62.
- 35 Tacitus (1970) *Germany*, XXXIV, 2-3.
- 36 Hamadani (1375) 346-7.
- 37 Piemontese (2000a) 102.
- 38 Budge (1889).
- 39 For example Friedländer (1913) 302-4.
- 40 Budge (1889) 255-8 of the Syriac text and 145-9 of the English translation.
- 41 Tacitus (1970) *Germany* XXXIV, 3.
- 42 Reinink (1983) I, 24-37 and II, 24-41.
- 43 Khizr and his role in the episode of the Fountain are possibly related to the figure of Saint Silvester (Pope Silvester I) and the Christian legend of the baptism of Emperor Constantine: see Casari (2003). See also Franke's contribution to the present volume.
- 44 As an homage to a pioneer dragoman, I used here and below the translation by H. W. Clarke from Nizami-Clarke (1881) 801-5, with a few changes. See also Nizami-Bürgel (1991) 377-8. Nizami-Sarvatyan (1368) has: ham āb-ash tavān kh'ānd ya' nī chū āb ("one can call it water, but it is almost water").
- 45 The gloss has shorter and longer versions. As an example, al-Nisaburi (1340), 330.
- 46 On the Arctic climate, Brümmer (1985).

