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Giorgio Rota

- 1 This article is a contribution to the long-standing scholarly discussion on the possible existence of an Eastern and a Western Persian school of historical writing (and, although the topic is touched upon only indirectly, of painting). The Author attempts to shed light on this subject through a (forcibly) brief comparison between two contemporaneous sources, Abū Bakr Tehrānī Eṣfahānī's *Ketāb-e Diyārbakriye* and 'Abdo'r-Razzāq Samarqandī's *Maṭla'o's-sa'deyn*. Melville notes a formal difference in the chronicles produced in the two regions: the emphasis is on dynastic histories with little reference to the Islamic calendar in Western Persia, on universal histories written in an annalistic format in the East. This was however due not to different attitudes towards historical writing but to the "predominantly oral sources or legends" (p. 36) at the disposal of the historians based in Western Persia and to the more openly nomadic nature of their patrons. In order to assess potential differences as far as the contents of the two sources are concerned, Melville focused his attention on four points in

particular: “territorial consciousness”, “dynastic legitimacy”, “religious sensibilities and imperatives” and “the rhetoric of history”. Given that historians came from that segment of the Persian population that produced also the bureaucrats and the religious scholars and that was “imbued with the literary traditions and accomplishments of Persian historiographical models, and their ethical underpinning” (p. 30), and that “both ‘eastern’ and ‘western’ historians in 15th-century Iran wrote according to the epistolary rules (*insha*) practised by the chancellery *munshis* from whose number they were generally drawn” (p. 31), Melville does not find here any significant difference between Tehrānī Eṣfahānī and Samarqandī, and the two “schools” they supposedly represent.

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Thèmes : 4.1. Histoire médiévale

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