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Problems of the lexicography of Middle Eastern Turkic, illustrated by the case of the *Kitāb al-afʿāl*

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For the lexicography of pre-Chaghataic Eastern Middle Turkic there exist, besides the texts available, a number of lexicographical works written in the Arabian grammarian tradition. The sources are of good quality, but evaluating them is difficult and time-consuming. A particularly important source was recently discovered and edited, the *Kitāb al-afʿāl*. The difficulties encountered in working with this type of source is discussed, taking this edition as an example.

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The research on the medieval lexicographers of Middle Turkic has been dominated by the interest taken in Maḥmūd al-Kāšġarī's *Diwān*. The exploration of the other works has largely been left aside for half a century. The existing editions are mostly just used as sources of examples. Sir Gerald Clauson (1972), however, solved a number of problems in passing concerning quotations in his etymological dictionary. Notable exceptions are Fazylov's (1966–1971) dictionary of Khwarezmian Turkic, Yüce's edition of the *Muqaddimat al-Adab* (1988) and the new edition of Abū Ḥayyān's *Kitāb al-Idrāk* by Özyetkin (2001).[1] Here I am concerned with the early, pre-Navā'ī, stage of the language, and with the lexicographical works in particular. In the meantime a number of critical text editions of important works from this stage have been published, among them the *Nahǧ al-Farādīs* (Tezcan & Zülfikar 1984), Rabghuzi's *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ* (second edition: Boeschoten & O'Kane 2015), two editions of Sayfī Sarāyī's translation of Saʿdī's *Gulistān* (Bodrogligeti 1970 and Karamanlıoğlu 1978), Eckmann's lexicon of the Rylands interlinear translation of the Qur'an (1976), and an interlinear translation of the Qur'an into Khwarezmian Turkic (Sağol 1993–1995). A full appreciation of the lexical inventory of (Eastern) Middle Turkic will have to take into account both the texts that have come down to us and the works of the grammarians/lexicographers. The latter sources, however, demand special considerations on which I will dwell here. The aim is to establish some methodological principles.

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1 Özyetkin has so far published a work on the verbs; the volume on the nouns is in preparation. The edition is satisfactory, but for some reason Özyetkin did not make use of the lexical index in the grammar section of the *Kitāb al-Idrāk* published in Ermers (1999).

The works[2]

AH: *Kitāb al Idrāk li-lisān al-Atrāk,* a manual of grammar with a wordlist, written by the famous Andalusian philologist Abū Ḥayyān. The earliest manuscript is from 1313. It has been edited in full by Caferoğlu (1931) and (the verbs in it) by Özyetkin (2001). In its margin another work has been added in one of the manuscripts, the so-called Margin Grammar (*Ḥaşiye*), edited by İzbudak and Kilisli Rıfat (1936).

BM: *Kitāb bulġa al-muštāq fī luġa at-Turk wa-l-Qifčāq,* written by a certain Ğamāl ad-Dīn at-Turkī in the 14th century, presumably in Egypt. Edited by Zajączkowski (1954, 1958) with a facsimile.

DM: *ad-Durra al muḍī'a fī luġa at-Turkiyya,* written in the 14th century in Syria (?). Most of the material was edited in a series of articles by Zajączkowski (1965a–b, 1968, 1969). Toparlı (2003²) has provided a facsimile edition.

FZ: Another multilingual work with Turkic glosses is the *Farhang-i zafān-gūya va jahān-pūyā,* written in India in the 14th century. The Turkic wordlist is of limited size (506 entries), but contains a number of interesting entries. The Turkic material that is listed in alphabetical order (of the Turkic entries) has been edited, first by Nadžip (1982a, 1982b), then by Dankoff (1987) with the Persian translations in transcription.

IM: Ibn Muhannā's *Kitāb Ḥilya al-Insān wa Ḥalaba al-Lisān* from the 14th century. The Turkic material, in two rather diverging manuscripts, has been edited: in one case by Melioranskij (1900) and the other by Kilisli Rıfat (1921). The latter edition has been critically revised by Malov (1928). Hacıyev (2008) presented an integral edition, without, however, solving the numerous problems still remaining. Ibn Muhannā was probably a native of Azerbaijan.

KA: *Kitāb al-af'āl,* see below.

KT: *Kitāb Tarğumān turkī wa-arabī wa-muġalī,* the famous wordlist edited by Houtsma (1894). Written in 1343.

MA: Of Maḥmūd Zamahšarī's *Muqaddimat al-Adab,* a multilingual phrasebook, numerous copies are preserved with glosses in all kind of Turkic varieties. I will refer to the edition of one manuscript with Khwarezmian Turkic glosses by Yüce (1988).

QK: *al-Qawānīn al-kulliya li-ḍabṭ al-luġa at-Turkiyya.* Written presumably in Egypt around 1400. The edition of Kilisli Rıfat (1928) was subsequently revisited by Telegdi (1938).

TZ: *Kitāb at-tuḥfa az-zakiyya fī luġa at-Turkiyya.* Written in Syria or in Egypt before 1928 (Ermers 1999: 28). Of this work there only exists a facsimile edition. Atalay (1942) published the wordlist. This edition was criticized by Halasi Kun (1947, 1948) who gave many suggestions for individual entries.

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2   I only offer summary information here; for details on most of the works, see Ermers (1999). I have placed the acronyms I use in this article before the names of the works. Some of the anonymous works have at times been (wrongly) attributed to Abū Ḥayyān, stressing the central position AH possesses.

Goals and context

The works presented do not stem from a uniform tradition, although complex dependencies (including connections with Maḥmūd al-Kāšġarī's *Diwān*) can be assumed to exist.[3] Most of them are primarily conceived as a grammar of some variety of Turkic. The wordlists appended to them are either just descriptive (AH) of some variety of Turkic, or have more practical aims (IM, KT, TZ, DM). This is reflected in the arrangement. Whereas AH takes the Turkic vocabulary in essentially alphabetic order and describes the entries with Arabic equivalents, the other four have Arabic items for entries. Besides, IM and KT arrange the material in domain-specific sections, whereas TZ uses alphabetical order. MA on the other hand is not a wordlist, but a phrasebook.

Sources and connections

The sources include both written sources and fieldwork (and introspection, as far as speakers of a Turkic variety are concerned). Material was also collected during fieldwork, which is most clear from AH and can also be perceived in other works, such as QK (which is very much in line with AH; see Ermers 1999: 31): the addition of possessive suffixes to responses to items in the intimate sphere in, e.g., *oġlum* '(my) son'; *ökčäm* '(my) heel', is a feature well-known to modern fieldworkers as well. AH names and repeatedly quotes one of his informants, an authority named Šaiḫ Faḫraddīn; besides, he seems to have tapped one written source from which deviant meanings are quoted frequently, the as yet unidentified *Kitāb Bäylik*.

The *Kitāb al-afʿāl*

In constrast, the *Kitāb al-afʿāl* ('Book of Verbs', KA), a recently discovered work, is rather the effort of a philologist working in his library, who produced a phrasebook of Arabic with Turkic glosses. It has been edited by Eminoğlu (2011). The edition includes a facsimile of the original, in which the small Turkic (and Persian) glosses are difficult to read. However, the transcription of the Turkic material seems to have been done competently and can be trusted in general (as far as the transliteration is concerned). The first third of the work also contains Persian glosses. Contrary to what we know thanks to Eckmann about the glosses in the trilingual interlinear translation from the Rylands Library, there are no indications that the Turkic glosses were influenced by the Persian ones. The entries are arranged according to Arabic roots following the twelve stems in فعل patterns (hence the title of the book), ordered alphabetically in traditional manner with the last root consonant taking precedence. It was written by a certain Abbās b. Hamza as-Sabrānī in 1356 AD. The manuscript looks rather messy.[4] The Arabic models are mostly written in the citation form (per-

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3   From an Arabist point of view this has been explored by Ermers (1999). A Turcological parallel to this is sorely lacking so far.
4   See Appendix for a sample page of the manuscript.

fective third person masculine) with or without an object or object particle, followed by an internal object with or without variants, and then a corresponding noun. The Turkic (and Persian) equivalents are written with much smaller letters below or sometimes above, or even slanted or upside-down. A typical example would be عُزْبَ عزوبةً وَ عزوبةً وَ هُوَ عَزَبٌّ 'he was a bachelor [bacheloring and bacheloring] and he (is) a bachelor', rendered below the line as *ärgän boldï .... bu ärgän* (101r3). But there are many other patterns as well, such as قَرَصَهُ بِإصبَينه يَقرِصُ وَ يَقرُصُ 'he pinched him with two (of) his fingers [he pinches and he pinches]', i.e., adding two variants of the imperfective glossed with *čimdidi anı iki barmaqı birlä* (same translation, 1r1).[5] There is no sense in presenting more examples at this time. Some words or phrases in the glosses were crossed out and in most cases replaced by alternatives, but the items crossed out are of no less lexicographical interest than the replacements, e.g.: *Ün qïldï* ~~qara čibin~~ *sinäk taqï* ~~avaz qïldï~~ *tašt* 'The fly buzzed and the sink clung' (for Arabic طَنَّ الذُّبَابُ وَ الطَّسْتُ طَنِيناً) (15r7; see Appendix).

The type of text we are dealing with is much akin to the interlinear translations of the Qur'an and should be classified with them. The two trilingual Arabic-Persian-Turkic "translations" I have worked with (the Rylands interlinear and the manuscript in the British Library with Persian and Western Oghuz glosses)[6] share the following characteristic: the Persian glosses are half sized and are placed beneath the Arabic original and the Turkic glosses are added in an even smaller size in the third row. This is all arranged very neatly. In our case, the whole is rather messy, as has been noted already.

Spelling

Here KA echoes the situation found in the Rylands manuscript: the Turkic material is rendered mostly just with the consonantal frame, with restricted information about vowel qualities. The spelling is certainly not in line with the common practice of the written language, but rather reflects a minimalist approach. The main problems are the vowels in non-first syllables; for the roots we mostly have a pretty good idea of the situation. But what are we to do with an item like افكا 'anger'? Do we have to read this as *öwkä, öfkä, äfkä* or *äwkä?* It is difficult to know, especially as the texts show some variation in spelling, e.g. Rabghuzi's *Qïşaş-ï Rabġūzī* (and other Khwarezmian Turkic works): افكا ~ اوفكا.

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5   The Persian equivalent is written above the line: نيشكنجيذش بدوانكشت. The irregular syntax of the Turkic caused by the interlinear nature of the text is irrelevant on the level of lexicography.

6   See Boeschoten (2014). The variety of Turkic in this text puts it outside the scope of this contribution.

The language

The book was written in Egypt, hence the misplaced mention of "Kipckak" in the title of Eminoğlu's edition.[7] There is nothing Kipchak about the Turkic in the book, much less so than in a source like AH, the language of which is not entirely correctly described as Kipchak. As Eminoğlu (2011: 18) himself points out, the hometown of the author of KA has to be Sabran, a fortified settlement on the Syr Darya in today's Uzbekistan, where (according to his medieval source) "the Oghuz traded and looked for protection". The language looks like a conventional post-Karakhanid written variety close to Khwarezmian Turkic, but lacking typical features such as the frequent rendering of "normal" ð$\bar{a}$l with z$\bar{a}$l (e.g. *uz* for *uð* 'bovine'; see Boeschoten 1993).

Editor's mistakes

In one phrase we are surprised by the rendering of the Arabic instance شَعَبَ القَصعَة شَعْباً with *sïdï čanaqnï yā bütün qïldï* 'he broke the bowl or put it together' (f.89v2). This, and similar paradoxes, leads one to recognize that a work well known as a surprise bag for this kind of pluriformity underlies the Arabic corpus: Ibn Manẓūr's *Lisān al-'Arab* (LA) from the 13th century. In the relevant entry in LA it is stated immediately that the verb شَعَبَ both means 'to join' and 'to separate', and in addition 'to reform', 'to spoil'. Without recourse to the *Lisān al-'Arab* the clarification of many entries in KA is impossible. Another example that clearly is based on an entry in LA is *küvändi vä salïndï*, a rendering for ماس 'to walk with a swinging proud gait' To handle the matter, expert knowledge of Arabic is required, more than can be expected from a modern Turcologist.[8]

The editor has not systematically analyzed the Arabic entries, as can be amply shown with examples such as the following: *közdämlädi közdämči qavmïnï közdämlägü yerdä*. In the index *közdämlä-* is translated as 'to watch'. This is obviously just a guess; the Arabic model reads رَبَا الرَبِيَّةَ القَومَ فِي المَرْبَاءِ. (f.88v1). In this phrase the root *RBʔ* stands for 'usury', and with some difficulty this can be found; in any case ربا 'usury' is well established in Persian. So, *közdäm* (if this transcription is correct) means 'usury'; this is clear even if I so far have not found the proper inner-Turkic references. There are simpler cases: the entry *eðlädi köni* 'he tanned the hide' (f.3r5) is misread *ïyladï köni* 'to make the leather smell nice' (no such meaning is otherwise established for *ïyla-*, by the way), while the Arabic model reads دَبَغَ الجِلدَ and the meaning 'to tan' for *eðlä-* is known in, e.g. Khwarezmian Turkic. The adjective *šavluġ* 'famous' is misread *šādluġ* (f.104r9); the Arabic model نَبِيه should have been enough to avoid this. In the case of the entry *ra'nā* a wrong meaning is selected: 'beautiful'; but the Arabic model is *ar'an*, 'careless'. Even without re-

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course to the Arabic, some mistakes could have easily been avoided. A verb *ul-* appears in the entry *uldï til* (f.105v6); the index gives its meaning as 'to be worn out'. But what does it mean for a tongue "to be worn out"? It seems clear that what is intended is another meaning given in DS (4034): 'to rot'; 'the tongue rotted away' makes sense as a meaning for the phrase; we must be dealing with some disease affecting the tongue (the tongue affected being called قُلاع in Arabic). These examples can be multiplied.

From these critical comments it may be clear that an edition and evaluation of a corpus with interlinear translations should not be approached just from the perspective of the Turkic material. This also can be said of Yüce's edition of the *Muqadimmat al-Adab*, although the treatment of the Khwarezmian Turkic glosses there is appropriate.

Copied items

The descriptive works (IM, AH, KZ) mentioned contain relatively few items of Arabo-Persian origin. This cannot be said of KA. More often than not, however, the items of Arabic origin entered as Turkic do not correspond to the Arabic entries for which they serve as translations, e.g.: *ḫīz* 'catamite' stands for مأبون; *diyat ber-* 'to pay blood money', for Arabic عقل, *ṭašt* 'sink', for Arabic طست (!),[9] etc. This can in principle have been caused by limitations of the author's lexical knowledge (although he must have been a Turk). However, a number of items clearly are morphologically well integrated into the Turkic structure, e.g. *ḫīzlanġučï* 'spintop' (for دُوامة), *aḥmaqsïn-* 'to consider to be stupid', *rāstlïq* 'righteousness', etc. In any case, the right approach must be to make a comparative assessment of the copied elements in the lexicographical works and the texts—if the elements occur in both they may be assumed to be integrated in the native vocabulary.

Semantic domains

An arrangement according to domains in far from full-sized vocabularies naturally brings the personal interests of the authors to the fore. In IM, we can see that trades and shops prevail; this work indeed has a practical inclination towards the marketplace that would even fit in modern Iran. But this does not mean that the formal arrangement of KA prevents its author from imposing particular personal interests. Looking over the patterns in LA, he certainly was not selecting everything. This is most unfortunate, because that would have given us material on the scale of the 15 volume *Lisān al-'Arab*. Remarkably enough, although the Arabic models vary, many of the Turkic equivalents turn up time and time again. Prominent examples include all kinds of physical features of humans, such as long and short necks, etc. In addition, many illnesses are present. With LA in the background, finding solution to all the problems can be quite trying. To take one example, in lines 106r8–9 we

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9   This is no mistake. Both synonymous variants (with *-s-* or with *-š-*) do exist.

seem to get two different pairs of lexemes for 'consumption': 'infected by consumption' is first rendered as *yinčgä iglig* for Arabic مدقوق, then as *sil-gūftä* for Arabic مسلول.

It can thus be said that the corpus of the various lexicographical works is unbalanced by necessity, and no criterion of frequency is involved. The advantage is that many unusual lexemes crop up in the lists. This is the case for instance with items that in normative lexicography would be considered too obscene. In AH for example we find examples such as *kärki-* 'to rub the penis against someone.' (Turkish *kerkin-* 'to touch someone indecently in public transport', in standard dictionaries neatly tucked away in obscure meanings such as 'sich an etwas anklammern' in Steuerwald 1988: 517); *käzär-* 'to get an erection' (Kirghiz *kezer-* 'to be very hungry, to crave'); *Sikim lorp kirdi* 'My penis flopped in'. Our KA is more decent in these matters, we still find expressions such as *Suw endürdi ğimā' qïlğan* 'The copulating man ejaculated sperm'. But on the other hand, as has been mentioned already, we get a flood of all kinds of quite specific illnesses and physical aberrations: *ägri közlüg* 'squinting downwards' (Arabic أقبل); *Qavuqï tašlïğ boldï ärniŋ* 'The man got stones in his bladder' (for Arabic حُصِيَ ٱلرَّجُلُ), etc.

In FZ we find relatively many names of birds and other wild animals. The names of birds, however, often appear to be confused, as in the cases of *balïqsïn* 'owl' (Persian جغد, wrong for 'heron'), *torğay* 'sparrow' (Persian گنجشك, for 'sky-lark'). Apparently the person who added the Turkic glosses was much less of a hunter than the one who prepared the model items.

Lessons to be learned

The *Kitāb al-afʿāl* does not contain the kind of language variation reflected in the works of the Arabic grammarians. The unique manuscript starts directly with the language material; a statement of its author about his purpose is lacking. But the variety of Turkic he presents directly relates to Central Asia, not to the situation in Egypt and Syria. With other authors, their conception of what variety they are describing is somewhat muddled in their statements. This is also true of Ibn Muhannā, who likewise can be placed outside the Mamlūk sphere.[10] He calls the language he describes alternatively *luğa at-Turk* (or *luğa at-Turkiyya*) and *luğa at-Turkistāniyya*; in addition, at one place he calls the speakers of it *Atrākunā* 'our Turks' (Ermers 1999: 23). Directing our attention to the situation in the Mamlūk territory, the author of the "Houtsma" list (KT) mentions 'pure' (*ḫālis*) Turkic, Kipchak and Oghuz (Turkmānī), but it seems that he treats the first two as more or less the same and mostly excludes Turkmānī items. (Some few entries are marked as such, e.g. for whatever reason *učmaq* 'paradise'.) For a situation where members of both Kipchak (the majority) and Oghuz tribes are present, this seems to indicate that he noticed the affinity between the Kipchak variety and the brand of written Turkic that was ini-

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10 The other work that is not involved in the discussion about Mamlūk Turkic is FZ, as it is connected to the language situation in Northern India.

tially introduced in Egypt (Khwarezmian Turkic adapted in the territory of the Golden Horde of the kind to be found in the *Gulistān* translation). The author of QK even takes a pejorative stance when he writes: "The language of the Oghuz (*Turk-mān*) is not Turkic (*Turkiyya*) (...) It is held in contempt by them and whoever speaks it is despised by them." (i.e. by the speakers of "Turkic", see Ermers 1999: 31). This is not in tune with the attitude taken by Abū Ḥayyān who tries to be precise about the provenance of his examples; he not only labels numerous items as "Kipchak" or as "Oghuz", but, in addition to Tatar, Bolghar and Khwarezmian Turkic, he also assigns some items to tribes such as Čäpni. The main problem remains the status of his default case, i.e. the items not labeled for anything. Again, in the context it seems to mean "non-Oghuzic" (Ermers 1999: 27), but if that is the case, why then label items "Kipchak"?

In the works there is no indication that Anatolian Turkic was being tapped for examples. Of course, "Rūmī" elements are quoted in later works (e.g., in the *Sanglax*). But that there are close connections at least in trade is clear from entries in AH, such as *künlük* (or *günlük*) 'looked to me like a pebble of incense'. What is meant there is the bark of the styrax tree used as incense. The styrax tree (*liquidambar orientalis*) grows only in SW Anatolia; the balsam extracted from its bark has been famous since antiquity; the leftovers of the production are used for incense.[11] It was shipped through Egypt on its way to India. Should this item be dubbed "Kipchak" if we apply the commonplace approach to AH? The high incidence of less common items that can be found in DS may well be caused by the fact that this dictionary is unique in its kind, rather than being a sign of any specific affinity with Anatolian Turkic at the time.

This brief discussion about language variation is meant to define the place of KA in the whole of the lexicographical tradition of its time. Strangely enough its focus on the Central Asian tradition makes it unique.

Generally speaking, the examples offered by lexicographers have the merit of defining the meaning. One has to always be wary, however, of the characteristic of usage behind the entries. On this point, the full strength of Abū Ḥayyān comes to the fore. Not only did he label stems as Kipchak and Turkmānī, but on occasion he also includes elements that he qualifies as archaic.

A work like KA has the merit of its numerous collocations. An example of the definitory advantage of the lexicographers' works for the interpretation of texts is the following case: In our edition of Rabghūzī's Qiṣaṣ (Boeschoten & O'Kane 2015) we translated the sentence *Rasūlnï yalġanġa tuttïlar* as 'There were those who considered the Prophet to be a liar.' On the basis of KA (which offers the three Arabic models كذَّبَ , أَكذَبَ and فَنَّدَ) it now appears that the collocation *yalġanġa tut-*, rather than 'to take for a liar', means 'to call a liar'. In general a lexical item is best fixed if it appears in both (a) lexicographical work(s) and in (a) text(s), because then both descriptive and usage characteristics are provided.

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11   For an exact description see Evliya Čelebi, *Seyaḥātnāme*, IX, 128v1 ff.

On the other hand, unusual lexemes may crop up in the lexicographical works. In these cases it is especially important to find correspondences in modern languages. From this perspective as well the *Kitāb al-afʿāl* is a source of tremendous importance. The existing edition is not suited to make this clear on first sight. The practice of publishing the text with a transcription of the Turkic material only and with an uncritical word index does not suffice.[12] Halasi Kun (1947) recommends the approach Caferoğlu had taken already in his edition of the *Kitāb al Idrāk*.

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12 I will not further comment on the continuing practice of Ottomanizing the transcription, especially of copies, yielding absurdities such as *laqvä-lıġ* 'affected by facial paralysis' (instead of the obvious *laqva-lıġ*).

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Appendix. *Kitāb al-af'āl* 'Book of Verbs' p. 15a. Trilingual section in which the Persian translation is sometimes written slanted above the Arabic.