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Titel: The educational role of the late Medieval Persian-Ottoman Turkish bilingual dicti...

Autor: Kirakosyan, Hasmik

Ort: Wiesbaden

Jahr: 2018

PURL: https://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?666048797_0022 | LOG_0029

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The educational role of the Late Medieval Persian-Ottoman Turkish bilingual dictionaries. The codices of the Matenadaran

Hasmik Kirakosyan & Ani Sargsyan

Kirakosyan, Hasmik & Sargsyan, Ani 2018. The educational role of the Late Medieval Persian-Ottoman Turkish bilingual dictionaries. The codices of the Matenadaran. *Turkic Languages* 22, 167–174.

Medieval Persian-Ottoman Turkish bilingual dictionaries (*farhangs*) were created as cultural and educational tools and were educational, instructive, and translating types of works. These dictionaries were special tools in the medieval educational system with which not only the Persian language was taught, but also the Persian and Arabic loan vocabulary in Turkish. Primarily, the medieval bilingual dictionaries aimed to help users read and understand the patterns of Persian classical literature, but they also assisted in teaching Persian grammatical categories that are relevant for the grammar of Ottoman Turkish. The examination of the medieval bilingual dictionaries kept in the Matenadaran support this theory.

Keywords: Persian-Ottoman Turkish dictionaries, *farhang*, Matenadaran

Assoc. Prof. Hasmik Kirakosyan, Institute of Ancient Manuscripts-Matenadaran, Yerevan State University, Department of Iranian Studies. 1 Alex Manoogian, 0025, Yerevan, Armenia. E-Mail: hasmik.kirakosian@ysu.am

Res. Ass. Ani Sargsyan, Asien-Afrika - Institut, University of Hamburg, Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Flögel Ost 20146. Hamburg, Germany. E-mail: ani.sargsyan@uni-hamburg.de

1. Introduction

The Persian-Ottoman Turkish bilingual dictionaries (*farhangs*) were compiled by men of letters to be used as cultural and educational tools for instruction, translation and explanation as early as the end of the 13th century (Öz 2016: 49–50; Yavuzarslan 2009: 12–14). These works were special tools in the medieval educational system for teaching the Persian language and through it Persian poetry. The later (16–17th c.) glossaries, in particular the *Daqā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq* (16th c.) (see below) and especially those works that incorporated grammatical instruction, began the process of creation of Turkish grammatical terms and contributed to the emergence of scientific language.¹

1 See the use and improvement of grammatical terms in Turkish in the material of the glossary *Daqā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq* (16th c.) in an article in preparation.

Knowledge of Persian was the essential and one may even say, the necessary condition of Turkish medieval instruction and literacy. Old Anatolian Turkish passed to the level of a literary language under the influence of Persian. Beginning with the period of the Samanid dynasty, New Persian became a language of regional communication, a *lingua franca* within a certain territory of Islamic culture. It served as special means of cultural communication up until the 19th century. The influence of Persian language and poetry on Turkish language and literature chronologically coincides with the period of the Persian Rebirth, i.e. the 11th century, while the 13th century is known as the period of cultural “Iranization” in the history of the Turkic states of Asia Minor. Ottoman Turkish was so saturated with Persian that Fragner defined it as “a daughter language of modern Persian in its structural aspect”.²

In the 16th century, Ottoman Turkish was the administrative language of the Ottoman Empire, a means of literary and conceptual expression, but Persian language and poetry remained in their foremost positions.³ The process of teaching Persian continued and rapidly developed, as did the propagation and appreciation of Persian poetry, with which Persian-Ottoman Turkish lexicography was strongly connected. In the 16th–17th centuries, within the territory of Ottoman Empire members of the Turkish population did not master Persian, or knew it only on the level of spoken language, and thus were ignorant about the literary language and did not understand literary works. In order to study Persian literature beginners had to learn Persian, which was also considered to be desirable for serving in the Ottoman court.

Thus, *farhangs*, Persian-Ottoman Turkish bilingual dictionaries, were needed to understand Persian poetry and to correctly speak and write Persian and Ottoman Turkish. That was why *farhangs* were used in medieval schools (*medrese*), where they also served as manuals for creative, educated and scientific persons. Beginners especially needed to master the lexical and grammatical nuances of Persian to correctly understand Persian poetry and use it in their works. A huge Persian vocabulary and Persian methods of word composition were introduced into Ottoman Turkish, thereby requiring the development of philological works included within Turkish bilingual dictionaries.

Persian-Ottoman Turkish dictionaries were mainly produced in the Ottoman Empire. Between the early period, when the first “*Şihāh ul- 'Ajam*” dictionary⁴ was composed in 1279, and the publication of the Persian-Turkish Dictionary (*Farhang-e fārsī-torkī*) by İbrahim Olgun and Cemşid Drağsan in 1967, two-third of such dictionaries were written in Turkey (Sāme'ī 1996: 395). The bilingual dictionaries of the Matenadaran presented in this article were written on the territory of Modern Turkey.

2 For this and further information see Fragner (2006: 39–48).

3 See also Csató et al. (2016: 1).

4 On the first Persian-Ottoman Turkish dictionary, with a section devoted to Persian word composition in Arabic and Turkish, see Turan (2014: 431–444).

2. The methodology of writing bilingual dictionaries

Medieval Persian-Ottoman Turkish dictionaries were written according to the principles of Persian lexicography and dictionary-writing, which were already formulated and had rich traditions (Baevskii 2007: 151). Medieval Persian dictionaries had methodological peculiarities; they served not only as explanatory and encyclopedic tools for translation, but also as dictionaries of proper names, synonyms, antonyms, and metrical versification. The demand for these works in medieval society was largely driven by their use as directories, educational manuals, and commentaries on literary works. *Farhangs* were, with rare exceptions, not limited to the definitions of word, but also cited instances of their use in literary works. They are considered to be unique literary anthologies.⁵

In bilingual educational dictionaries it was also usual to categorize words by their part of speech: noun (*asāmī*) and infinitive (*maṣādīr*). Dictionaries which included both explanatory lists of words and grammatical explanations were called universal (*jāme'*).

The inclusion of grammatical material in *farhangs* is supporting evidence of their educational significance.⁶

In Persian-Ottoman Turkish *farhangs*, such materials were included in a different way: in separate sections or in word-articles. In the grammatical parts, authors also discussed problems of the spelling and pronunciation of entries. In the 16th century, the Persian or Arabic vocabulary already introduced in Ottoman Turkish was adapted to the Turkish pronunciation, i.e. underwent palatalization (Stein 2006: 144–145), as can be observed in the glossary of *Daqā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq* where the author explains the pronunciation of the words.

The prefaces of the medieval dictionaries contain words of praise addressed to God, *farhang* writing reasons and stimulus, the person who ordered the work or proposed its writing and why, as well as a list of *farhangs* that were used as sources in writing the work. In some cases, issues concerning the contents of the work are noted.

In the late Middle Ages, dictionaries were written in verse (*niṣāb*) and in prose. The dictionaries in verse had two aims: educational and poetic. They were mainly used in *medreses* to enable students to learn foreign words by heart and master versification and rhyming schemes.

5 In medieval *farhangs* it was traditional to base word explanations on examples borrowed from literary works. For instance, in his dictionary *Mi'yār-i jamālī*, Šams-i Faxrī gives examples of the words from his own verses; the author of *Šiḥāḥ ul-furs* takes examples from his father's works. The most frequently cited Persian classical authors in dictionaries are Neẓāmī, Rudakī, Ferdowsī, 'Unṣurī, Ḥāfeẓ, Sa'adī, etc. See Baevskii (2007: 127–134).

6 The inclusion of grammatical material in Persian *farhangs* begins in the 11th century. The first example is the *Farhang-i ja'farī* (1040/1630–1631).

Dictionaries in verse were poems called *masnavī* and they were divided in *qīṭa*'s and *baḥrs* (verse measures). The appearance of these dictionaries was conditioned by the goal of propagating Persian classical literature, of which the versified dictionaries were devoted to providing samples, commentaries, and explanations. The medieval book format did not allow for inscribing such explanations and commentaries in the books themselves and therefore there were separate volumes of dictionaries. Such Persian-Ottoman Turkish dictionaries, which explained or taught in verse the vocabulary of any Persian literary work, and showed the metrical versification rules, were also appreciated as philological works and had commentaries which are known as *šerḥ*. Alongside their educational significance, these works had great literary and aesthetic value, and were usually included in the same manuscript miscellanies (*mejmū'a*) as literary works.

The short colophons of the copies of dictionaries are full of important biographical information about the scribe, the composer (sometimes about the renovator also), the circumstances of copying, renovating or buying the manuscript, as well as data about the time of its manuscript copying. Many copies of Persian-Turkish dictionaries lack such rich colophons, which may however be explained by their educational and teaching character. Often dictionaries were copied by learned persons, or teachers at *medreses* who wanted to have a copy of their own to use for teaching, and who did not think it necessary to leave their names in the colophons. This is why there are now numerous copies of medieval bilingual dictionaries kept in diverse manuscript depositories.

3. The bilingual Persian-Turkish dictionaries of the Matenadaran

The Persian-Turkish bilingual *farhangs* kept in the Yerevan Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (below MM) are copies from the 16th–18th centuries. They are witnesses of the cultural milieu of that time.

In terms of structure, these are works in prose and verse that are included in different volumes and miscellanies. Notes, additions and scribbling in the margins by the owners point to their practical significance, which at first was educational. Some of these manuscripts, especially those in verse, which are important from a literary and aesthetic viewpoint, were copied with literary ornaments, i.e. miniatures, vignettes and leather bindings. Most of these probably also had “commercial” value.

3.1. Dictionaries in prose

3.1.1 The Miscellany N 133 from the collection of Arabic Script manuscripts at the MM is a copy of a well-known Persian-Turkish dictionary (written in 947/1540–1541) called *Luyat-i Ni'metullāh* (Dictionary of Ni'metullāh) by Ni'metullāh ibn Aḥmad b. Ġāzī al-Rūmī (date of death 969/1561–1562) (Lagarde 1884: 53–55,

Öz 2010: 156–160).⁷ The colophon states that the scribe was Jabbar ibn Pīr Aḥmad al-Rāz Rūmī and the copy was made in 1105/1693. The colophon is at f.237 and the manuscript has 238 pages (Kostikyan 2017: 69). It is a dictionary in prose, written in one column with the script *nasx*. The preface occupies ff.3v–4v with the above-mentioned structure, and mentions the dictionaries *Uqnūm-i 'Ajam* (from which the copy was imitated), *Şihāh ul- 'Ajam*, and that by Luṭfullāh Ḥalīmī and Ḥasan ibn Ḥuseyn ibn 'Omād Qaraḥiṣārī (f.4r).

The dictionary *Luyat-i Ni'metullāh* includes the genres *asāmī* and *maṣādīr* of medieval dictionary writing, i.e. *jāme'*. The lemmata part is divided according to parts of speech intermediating by grammatical section. The part devoted to morphology, occupying ff.20r–26v and called *Qā'ede-i zabān-i fārsī* (Grammar of the Persian Language), contains explanations devoted to correct speech, word composition and morphology, based on examples in verse borrowed from literature. The words are ordered according to the following sequence of vowels: long *ā*, short *a*, *o*, *e*; divided into subheadings.

3.1.2 The Miscellany N 196 from the collection of Arabic Script manuscripts at the MM includes two works by Kemāl Pāšāzāde (d.1533): *Risāle-i yā-yi fī lisān al-fārsī* (Treatise about the Persian *ya*) in Turkish and the glossary *Daqā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq* (Details of the Truth) (Kostikyan 2017: 87–88).⁸ The first work is not a dictionary, but is devoted to examining the word-composing *-ī* morpheme; in fact it demonstrates the importance of teaching and studying Persian in the 16th century.

The glossary *Daqā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq* is included in the miscellany on ff.27r–174v. The f.174r contains the colophon: “ سنه ٩٧٢ ”, which says that these philological works were copied in 1564/5 but does not mention the name of the scribe. This fact also supports an educational purpose of the dictionary because, in order to have their own working copies, teachers at the *medrese* frequently copied the manuscripts without mentioning their names and used these copies in the educational process.

The *Daqā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq* is a glossary of Persian synonyms and homonyms with Turkish explanations, and is based on *beyts* (double verse) and *qīṭa*'s cited from the Persian classical authors Neẓāmī, Ferdowsī, Ḥāfez, Sa'adī, and others (Lagarde 1884: 37–38, Öz 2010: 148–153). Its genre corresponds with that of Armenian dictionaries called *Barḵ' govasanakank'* (Words of Praise), which examine laudatory words and expressions quoted from oratorical, poetical and highly artistic works. The *Daqā'iq al-ḥaqā'iq* consists of word articles in which related compounds and word-forming suffixes and prefixes are examined.

In separate word articles the lemmas are given as, for instance, Persian *bozorg-dašt* and *dorūd* 'greetings', *nīk o nīkū* 'good, kind', *angešt* and *axgar* and *ātaš* and

7 For the oldest copies, see: Catalogue des manuscrits persans, 1989, Persan n°195, 196, 197, 200, 205, 206; Suppl: turc 265 à 272, 561, 568 et 1347; Flügel (1977, S. 132, n° 128; S. 137 n° 134–135), etc.

8 Among copies of the dictionary, see Flügel (1977: 130–132, n°127, n° 128); Rieu (1966: 514ab (Add.7887)), Dmitriev (2002, N 846, 229), etc.

āzar ‘spark, fire’, *deh* and *dehqān* and *kand* and *rustā* ‘village, town’, *xāme* and *kelk* ‘pen’, *abraš* ‘spotty horse’ and *šabdīz* ‘black horse’, comprising nearly 400 words in total.

The character and structure of this work are supporting evidence that it had the role of an educational manual and was used in the *medreses* and by aspiring poets who studied Persian poetry and its nuances as part of their literary development as well as Persian lexicography in Turkish.

The glossary was not published, despite its great number of manuscripts, but the material it contains is important for studying sources and history in the field of Persian and Turkish dictionary writing (the scientific study of the glossary, based on the material in this copy, is being done).

3.2 Dictionaries in verse

3.2.1 The Persian-Ottoman Turkish dictionary *Tuḥfe-i Šāhidī* (The gift of Shahidī) (921/1514) contains the vocabulary of the work *Maḡnavī-yi Ma‘navī* by Jalāladdīn Muḡammad Balkhī (Mewlānā Rūmī, 13th century), one of the most studied and often copied works in Turkish studies (Paul de Lagarde 1884: 8–9, 29–30, Verburg 1997: 5–87, Kılıç 2007: 516–548).⁹ It is included in two miscellanies in the Arabic script collection at the MM: Mss. N 741, N 937 and one volume under the N 325.¹⁰ The ff.108v–127r of the Persian-Turkish-Arabic trilingual manuscript miscellany N 741 contain the dictionary *Tuḥfe-i Šāhidī* consisting of 22 *qīṭa*’s. The miscellany was composed in 1196/1781 in Ankara and the scribe is Muḡammad al-Marašī.

The miscellany N 937, according to its colophon (f.47v), was written earlier, in 1033 /1623–1624, by the scribe ‘Amīd al-Ḥuseyn. In this manuscript miscellany, the scribe Farīd ad-dīn ‘Aṭṭār wrote the dictionary consisting of 21 *qīṭa*’s on the ff.27v–47r, after the work *Pandnāma*. The colophons say that the manuscript contains additional *beyts*: *almalḡaq*. The copy is unique for its working style: the missing *beyts* are added, explanations and commentaries are provided in the margins, and at the end there are probably the names of additional scribes.

The manuscript N 325 contains the entire dictionary *Tuḥfe-i Šāhidī*, the scribe of which is Muṣṭafa Natīf. It consists of 24 pages written in the script *nasx*. The artistic design of the book gives evidence that it had aesthetic value and perhaps even a “commercial” purpose. The text of the manuscript is the most complete: preface, 27 *qīṭa*’s, a date calculated with *ebjed*.¹¹

3.2.2 The other Persian-Turkish dictionary in verse kept in the Arabic Script collection at the Yerevan Matenadaran is the *Tuḥfe -i Vehbī* (Gift of Vehbi), written in

9 Among many copies, see: Flügel, 1977: 135, n° 131, 136 n° 132; Cf. Rieu 1966: 513v–514r (Harl. 5494), etc.

10 About copies N 937, 741, 55, 983 kept in MM, see Avetisyan (2011: 148–167).

11 See descriptions in Kostikyan (2017, N 741, 237, N 937, 243, N 325, 134–135).

the 18th century (Kılıç 2007: 410–475; Öz 1997: 219–232).¹² It is included in the manuscript Miscellany N55, while the Mss N 983 is a separate copy.¹³

In the manuscript miscellany (ff.73v–96r), the dictionary is copied after the *Dīvān* of Şā'ib Tabrīzī, an Iranian poet of the 17th century. The dictionary has 57 *qīṭa*'s, one *maṣnavī* with 201 *beyts*, and a *tārīx* with 5 *beyts*, according to which the author wrote it in 1196/1781–1782. The name of the scribe of the manuscript N 55 is known, Şa'īd Muḥammad Laṭīfī (096r), but the date of copying is unknown. The other copy is the separate volume N 983, which has 57 *qīṭa*'s. There is no information about either the date of writing or the scribe.

One may say that the history of medieval Persian-Turkish bilingual dictionaries ends with this dictionary written in the 18th century.

4. Conclusion

The study of the medieval bilingual Persian-Ottoman Turkish dictionaries and the linguistic interrelations of the time attest to the great influence of the Persian language on Turkish, revealing numerous Persian, as well as Arabic words which were introduced into Turkish by their intermediary and became a part of the Turkish vocabulary. The manuscript dictionaries kept at the Matenadaran are considered to be *farhangs* and glossaries, and play a significant role in studying the medieval educational methodology. The marginal notes and the absence of scribes' names in some of these dictionaries indicate that these copies were manuals used in *medreses*, which explains the existence of numerous copies. As manuscripts, they are considered to be copies of an early period and can be useful for the compilation of critical texts.

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12 See copies in Flügel 1977: 143–44, n° 141; Rieu 1966: 515v (Add. 7687).

13 See descriptions in Kostikyan 2017, N 55, 30–31, N 983, 249.

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