



BĀSMA

BĀSMA (also *bāšma*, *basma*, and *bašma*), a Turkish word which originally referred to a design applied (with an etching stylus, a wooden block press known as a *qāleb-e taḳtā'ī*, etc.) in ink, silver and gold foil, and the like to paper, cloth, and other such materials. It is similar in type to designs used in decorating Isfahani cloth (*qalamkāri*) or to those used in marking ordinary printed cloth (*čīt*). The noun *bāšma* and the verb *bāšma kardan* apparently entered Persian after the Mongol invasion, replacing the terms *mohr* and *mohr kardan*; the term *bāšmačī* was applied to those who stamped the cloth. Thus in the *Tadkerat al-molūk*, which was apparently written during the years 1137-42/1724-29, one finds *bāšmačī* with this meaning, alongside goldbeater (*zarkūb*), gilder (*moḍahheb*), and papermaker (*kāḡadgar*). With the spread of the printing industry in Iran, the similarity between the act of applying *bāšma* designs and that of printing led to the adoption of the term for *ṭab'* and *čāp* (impression); likewise, the term *bāšma-kāna* came to be used for *maṭba'a* and *čāp-kāna* (printshop, press), *bāšmačī* for "printer," and *bāšmakārī* for "printing." The term *bašma-kāna* was employed to mean "press" for the first time in Iran during the Safavid period, at the beginning of the 17th century. The *bāšma-kāna* entry in the trilingual dictionary by a Carmelite father in Iran named Angelo à St. Joseph, *Gazophylacium Linguae Persarum* (p.415), which was completed in 1081/1670 and published in 1096/1684, defines the term as *kār-kāna-ye bašmajī, maṭba'*.

The terms *bāšma*, *bāšma-kāna*, *bāšmačī*, and *bāšmakārī*, meaning respectively "print," "press," "printer," and "printing industry," began to be popularized for



a second time in 19th-century Iran through influence from Azarbaijan and Tabrīz. The *bāsmā-kāna* of Tabrīz was in operation until the death of ‘Abbās Mīrā (1249/1833) and the Tehran press (*maṭba‘-e ḥorūfī*) until 1261/1845, when both were replaced by lithographic forms of printing.

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