



ĠĪĀṬ AL-LOĠĀṬ

ĠĪĀṬ AL-LOĠĀṬ ('Aid in [the explication of] vocabulary', punning on the author's name), a Persian dictionary compiled in India in 1827 by the linguist, philologist, and poet Moḥammad ĠĪĀṬ- al-Din b. Jamāl-al-Din b. Šaraf-al-Din Rāmpuri Mošṭafā-ābādi. The dictionary comprises more than 17,000 entries; this number is considerably enhanced when homographs and phrasal units defined within the entries are also taken into account. The articles in the *ĠĪĀṬ* are arranged alphabetically in order of the first and second letter of the entry. All words beginning with the same letter form a chapter (*bāb*); words with their second letter in common form a section (*faṣl*) within the chapter, and the sequence of any further letters is ignored. The dictionary comprises Persian and Arabic words, as well as Turkic loanwords in Persian. In some cases Moḥammad ĠĪĀṬ provides the Indian (Hindi) equivalent to his entries. The author shows great erudition in the Arabic language, and pays much closer attention to Turkic vocabulary than his predecessors. Occasionally, the dictionary lists Turkic homophones and homographs. The *ĠĪĀṬ* evinces an etymological approach to lexicography: when the author discusses the origins of a word, he takes into account its phonetic and morphological structure. He focuses on loanwords found in the works of Persian poets and writers popular with Indian readers at the time, and on authors whose works were part of school curricula. This made his dictionary a very useful reference work, and truly a "students' dictionary."

In the introduction to his work Moḥammad ĠĪĀṬ, who compiled the dictionary over the course of fourteen years, gives information about his life and times,



his writings and other scholarly pursuits. Apparently, while working on the dictionary he was actively engaged in teaching, and authored several books: commentaries on the *Golestān* of Saʿdi, on the *Eskandar-nāma* of Nezāmi of Ganja, and on the *qaṣidas* of Badr-al-Dīn Čāči (see [BADR ČĀČĪ](#)).

By the early nineteenth century India had been the leading center of Persian lexicography for several hundred years. The accumulation of Persian-language sources—belletristic works, and treatises on medicine, astronomy, mathematics, philosophy, and poetics—necessitated the compilation of a new comprehensive, encyclopedic dictionary. The *ĠĪĀṬ al-lōḡāt*, which drew on all authoritative Persian and Persian-Arabic lexicographic works of its time, superseded in importance the older dictionaries. The author makes a point of presenting all meanings listed by his predecessors, and adds his own lexicographic considerations. He is consistent in providing references to his sources. The *ĠĪĀṬ* is a critical, comprehensive dictionary with elements of originality.

Among the main lexicographic sources of the *ĠĪĀṬ al-lōḡāt* are *Moʿayyed al-fożalā* (925/1519), *Kašf al-lōḡāt wa al-eṣṭelāḡāt* (ca. 950/1543), *Madār al-afāzel* (1001/1593), *Majmaʿ al-Fors* (1008/1600), *Majmuʿ al-lōḡāt* (before 1011/1602), *Farhang-e Jahāngiri* (1017/1608, q.v.), *Laṭāʿef al-lōḡāt* (before 1032/1632), *Borhān-e qāṭeʿ* (1062/1652, q.v.), *Farhang-e Rašidi* (1064/1654, q.v.), *Serāj al-lōḡāt* (1147/1734), *Čerāḡ-e hedāyat* (1147/1734, q.v., Suppl), *Bahār-e ʿAjam* (1162/1749, q.v.), *Moṣṭalaḡāt al-šoʿarā* (1180/1766), and *Ferdows al-lōḡāt* (before 1242/1827). In addition to the dictionaries, the author uses as sources Persian literary works—both poetry and prose—as well as treatises on medicine, astronomy, geography, and other sciences. In comparison with the older dictionaries, the *ĠĪĀṬ* offers more scientific terminology, as well as words and expressions derived from the vocabulary characteristic of various social strata and professional guilds. In many respects it is both a philological and an encyclopedic dictionary, where some lexicographic articles have the scope and detail of treatises. Among these are the entries *Haft eqlim*, *Musiqi*, *ʿAruż*, *Faṣl*, *Eżāfat*, and *Hendustān*. In addition, the dictionary has explicit normative aims. Moḡammad ĠĪĀṬ endeavors to establish the standard for pronunciation, and to note deviations from it. He gives special attention to different variants of pronunciation, rejecting many as incorrect. The normative aspects of his linguistic work earned him wide recognition as an uncontested authority on matters of language.

The *ĠĪĀṬ* is considered one of the authoritative dictionaries of the Persian



language, noted for reliable orthography and vocalization of its entries, as well as for the accurate rendition of their meaning and usage. Although modern dictionaries are beginning to displace the *ĠĪĀṬ al-loġĀṬ*, it is still widely used, especially in Central Asia.

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