



# LEXICOGRAPHY III. CLASSICAL BILINGUAL GLOSSARIES

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## iii. Classical bilingual glossaries

In the 12th and 13th centuries, despite considerable activity in other branches of Persian literature, no new monolingual dictionaries seem to have been compiled. However, during this period at least a dozen Arabic–Persian dictionaries of all kinds appeared. Bearing in mind that Persian seems to have reached the apogee of its incorporation of Arabic vocabulary toward the end of this period (Lazard; Perry, 1991, pp. 132-35), one might surmise that these bilingual tools played an active part in transforming the Persian language. An important early example, which lists ca. 20,000 Arabic entries, mostly nouns, alphabetically by initial, then final, is the *Takmelat al-aṣṇāf*, compiled during the 11th century by ‘Ali b. Moḥammad b. Sa‘id Adib al-Karmini (Karmina was a town in Sogdiana). The Persian glosses include hundreds of words not found in other dictionaries. The unique manuscript in the Ganj Bakhsh Library in Islamabad was first published in facsimile (introduction by Akbar Ṭobut, Islamabad, 1985), and has now appeared in an edition by ‘Ali Ravāqi with useful indices (2 vols., Tehran, 2006).

Early Arabic category-based dictionaries, which listed primarily nouns (Ar. *esm*, pl. *asmāʾ*, double plural *asāmi*), used sometimes to append lists of verb



infinitives (*maṣāder*), a convention which was continued in Arabic-Persian lexicography and elaborated into separate glossaries (see [DICTIONARIES ii. Early Arabic-Persian Lexicography](#)). The earlier Persian works of both types, which tended to arrange their material according to Arabic conventions (i.e., lexical roots and paradigms), may originally have been monolingual Arabic vocabularies for Iranian scholars, which were later retrofitted with Persian glosses (e.g., *al-Sāmi fi'l-asāmi* of Maydāni; cf. the contemporary *Moqaddemat al-adab*, mentioned below). By the mid-12th century, however, such works were responding actively to the needs of Persian lexicography. Thus the very successful *Tāj al-maṣāder* of Abu Ja'far Bayhaqi (d. 1150) introduced strict alphabetical order within the morphological sections. In the 13th century Qāzi Maḥmud b. 'Omar in his *Mohaḍḍeb al-asmā'* (ed. M.-Ḥ Moṣṭafavi, Tehran, 1985) expanded the nominal repertory to include adjectives, particles, and collocations, arranging the material alphabetically by initial and first vowel, while glossing it succinctly in Persian. Some of his glosses comprise not native Persian, but assimilated Arabic, words: e.g. *al-arab* “need” (Ar. root 'r-b) is glossed as Ar. *ḥājat*, and not, for example, as Pers. *niyāz*. Persian *maṣāder* glossaries, which show the same development, illustrate the important process of incorporation of Arabic verbal nouns into Persian by means of auxiliary verbs (e.g., in the *Tāj al-maṣāder*: “al-mowāfaqa: be-kasi mowāfaqaṭ kardan”). Such compendia, which were widely copied and memorized, could serve innovative writers as organized stores for Arabic vocabulary waiting to be “borrowed” (see [DICTIONARIES ii. Early Arabic-Persian Lexicography](#)).

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