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# LEXICOGRAPHY V. EVOLUTION OF PERSIAN LEXICOGRAPHY IN INDIA

v. Evolution of Persian lexicography in India

As the court centers of Persian literary patronage expanded eastward and westward under mainly Turkish-speaking dynasts, so the practice of lexicography followed. The Delhi sultanate and the Mughals were particularly productive. Between the years 1300 and 1900 a score of significant alphabetically-ordered works were compiled (Perry, forthcoming).

In the Subcontinent, from the outset most alphabetical dictionaries were arranged by initial, and quotations from eminent 13th-century Indian poets such as Amir Ḵosrow Dehlavi and Masʿud-e Saʿd-e Salmān joined those of the Persian classics. This fusion introduced a few Indic entries of words used by such poets, and in turn occasional Indic glosses of Persian words in a dialect termed *Hendavi* or *Hendi*. A number of early Indian lexicographers reveled in their polyglossia, citing words not only in Indic and dialects of Persian but Eastern Turkish, Pashto, and *Rumi* (Eastern Christian terms of Greek, Latin, Aramaic or Syriac provenance). The seven-part multilingual *Farhang-e zafānguyā va jahānpuyā* (Dictionary for the polyglot and globetrotter) of Badr-al-Din Ebrāhim glossed vocabulary of Early New Persian, Arabic, other Semitic tongues, *Rumi*, and Turkic into Persian in separate lists. The *Adāt al-fożalā'* of

822/1419 by Qāżi Khan Dhārvāl (and Baevskii, pp. 87-94) often uses Arabic and/or Indic glosses as part of the definition.

For the first three centuries, however, the goal of Indo-Persian lexicographers was essentially to preserve and augment the inventories of their prestigious predecessors, both Iranian and Indian. Some proved to be useful philologists, incidentally adding to the slender corpus of extant verse by early poets such as Rudaki. From the time of the Mughal emperor Akbar I and the Safavid shah ʿAbbās I (r. 1588-1629), more direct contact between Muslim India and Iran, especially in the form of refugee Safavid poets and scholars, inaugurated an era of more critical lexicography, since Persian was increasingly seen as a living and elastic medium with more than one plausible stylistic standard. Three émigrés from Iran spearheaded this development with works widely acclaimed as comprehensive and reliable. Jamāl-al-Din Ḥosayn Enju Širāzi (d. 1626 in Agra) compiled his 10,000-entry *Farhang-e Jahāngiri* in two editions (1608 and 1622). The popular work, in which the entries were alphabetically arranged by *second* letter, was known simply as *Farhang* and became the first Persian dictionary cited in Europe when Thomas Hyde (1636-1703), the Laudian professor of Arabic, referenced it in his *Historia religionis veterum Persarum* (Oxford, 1700). The *Majmaʿ al-fors* by Moḥammad-Qāsem Soruri Kāšāni (d. 1626), also called *Farhang-e Soruri*, was noted for its critical assessment of 53 earlier dictionaries. Soruri prepared two editions of the work (1599 and 1618) before his emigration from Isfahan to the Mughal court. The *Borhān-e qāṭeʿ* was compiled in 1651 by Moḥammad-Ḥosayn b. Ḵalaf Tabrizi, who used the pen-name Borhān, at the Qoṭbšāhi court in Hyderabad of the Deccan. The work essentially combined the *Farhang-e Jahāngiri* with the earlier version of *Farhang-e Soruri*, but Borhān Tabrizi eliminated the examples, arranged the entries more conveniently in a strict alphabetical order by initial, and added words and compounds. Among the ca. 20,000 entries there are poorly understood Iranian dialect words and, as in the *Farhang-e Jahāngiri*, Aramaic heterograms in nonsensical transcriptions. For these and other errors the *Borhān-e qāṭeʿ* was roundly criticized, and the criticism culminated two centuries later in a series of defenses and counter-attacks triggered by the broadside *Qāṭeʿ-e Borhān* by the poet Ḡāleb (1797-1869). In the Mughal cultural centers of Lucknow and Delhi, questions of the poetical propriety of Indo-Persian dialect words and metaphors increasingly prompted Indian poet-lexicographers (Hindu as well as Muslim) to write original prose treatises on aspects of Persian philology, lexicology, and grammar: one of the most brilliant of these scholars was Lāle Rāy Tēkchand

Bahār, author of the popular dictionary *Bahār-e ʿAjam* (1152/1739; Blochmann, pp. 29-31; Perry, forthcoming).

As Persian gave way to Urdu in the 19th century, Persian was dropped by the British as the official language of administration in 1834. Indo-Persian lexicography enjoyed an Indian summer as a cottage industry, in which local scholars, sometimes "ghost-compiling" for local rulers, produced conventional or idiosyncratic works with unexpected innovations marking the end of an era. Šāhjahān Begam (1838-1901), the strong-willed *nowwāb* of Bhopal, used her talented court clientele and three printing presses to produce the *Ḵazānat al-logāt* (introduced by Navrosji Hormasji, 2 vols., Bhopal, 1886), a hexaglot arranged in columns with the source word (Urdu) and its equivalents (Persian-Arabic-Sanskrit-English-Ottoman Turkish) running across in individual cells and a Persian marginal commentary. Women's vocabulary, popular customs, and shrewd distinctions between (Indo-)Persian and Urdu usage are prominent features (Perry, 1998, pp. 331-38). In 1899, Shaykh Moḥammad Yusof Ḥakim Ḥaydarābādi produced his *Qesṭās al-loḡa*, a massive monolingual Persian dictionary. In his preface the compiler states that he spent some years "among the Christians," and marvels over the *Dictionary: Persian, Arabic, and English Published under the Patronage of the Honourable East-India Company* (London, 1852) by Francis Johnson (d. 1876). Johnson had revised the Arabic-Persian-English dictionary (2 vols., Oxford, 1777-1780) of John Richardson (d. 1795), and his revision in turn became the model for the *Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (London, 1892) by Francis Joseph Steingass (1825-1903) – each in content an English distillation of the Indo-Persian tradition. The revolutionary feature that caught Ḥakim's eye was not so much the strict alphabetical-initial order, already dominant in India, but the absence of the overdetermined *bāb*-and-*faṣl* rubrics of traditional Persian dictionaries. The shaykh proudly wrote his own dictionary free of any *faṣl*, in lined ledgers, in two columns, with end-stopped entries and diacritical *ḥarakāt*. Though it marks the transition to a modern lexicographic layout, the *Qesṭās* is in most other respects a very poor dictionary and was never published (an incomplete three-volume copy is preserved in Hyderabad, Government Oriental Manuscript Library, MS pers. 117-119; see Perry, 1998, pp. 330-31).

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