



## TOḤFAT AL-AḤBĀB

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**TOḤFAT al-AḤBĀB** (Gift for friends), a Persian dictionary of the early Safavid period, compiled by Ḥāfeẓ Solṭān-ʿAlī Owbaḥi Heravi in 936/1529-30. Owbaḥi was born in Owba, a village near the city of Herat in present-day Afghanistan (on Owba see *Gazetteer of Afghanisan* III, pp. 320-24). He was a poet, calligrapher, and singer. He dedicated this dictionary to the vizier of Khorasan, probably K̄vāja Karim-al-Din Ḥabīb-Allāh of Sāva, who is not, however, mentioned by name (Ṣafā, *Adabiyāt* V, p. 374). The dictionary contains 2,483 words from everyday life and includes words found in early Persian poetry.

Owbaḥi says he was led to compile his dictionary when he noticed that the works of early poets were being neglected because many Persian terms used by them had become obsolete. His stated aim was to explain those Persian words, which actually form the majority of the entries. His dictionary, however, contains also many dialectal terms, especially from Transoxania, as well as names of persons, geographical locations, professional terminology, and a number of Arabic and Turkic words. It is organized in twenty-five chapters (*bāb*) in alphabetical order, each one containing words with a particular initial letter. Each chapter is divided into sections (*faṣl*), which are in order, each one containing words with a particular final letter. The work also contains an introduction, written in both poetry and prose, and ends with a brief extra chapter, “Bāb al-mostaʿarāt,” in which twenty-six metaphorical expressions are explained.

The work contains also 2,483 words cited from Persian poetry. The poems are mostly from the period of the Samanids, the dynasty that ruled over



Transoxania and Khorasan between 819 and 1005. The author had at his disposal two earlier dictionaries, Asadi Ṭusi's *Loḡat-e fors* and *Me'yār-e jamāli* of Šams-e Faḡri, of which the former was apparently more important to him. In general, *Toḥfat al-aḥbāb* contains the same vocabulary found in *Loḡat-e fors*, but adds interpretations and expands definitions; it also contains entries not found in *Loḡat-e fors*. The author changed the definitions of some words.

*Toḥfat al-aḥbāb* was an important dictionary that served as source for subsequent dictionaries such as *Farhang-e rašidi*, *Farhang-e Soruri*, and *Farhang-e jahāngiri*.

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