Persian Printing and Publishing in England in the 17th Century

Geoffrey Roper

THE ORIGINS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF PERSIAN printing in England, as elsewhere, are inseparable from those of Arabic printing. A general survey of the latter has been given in an earlier article,1 and the purpose here is to consider further the earliest attempts at printing Persian texts, and the introduction of specifically Persian type-forms. This in turn is of course closely linked with the development of Persian studies in Britain and the rest of Europe, which was the subject of an important survey by the celebrated dedicatee of this volume.2

The first English scholar to make serious attempts to include texts in the Arabic script in his publications was the celebrated 17th-century jurist and antiquary John Selden (1584–1654). In 1614 he published a treatise called Titles of honor in which he introduced a number of “Words of the Eastern tongues,” apparently engraved on wood-blocks inserted into the lines of type. These were mostly crude and malformed, with incorrect ligatures and letter-forms. One of the titles is given as “Firistigiani [presumably a mistake for Firistigiani] = Prestigiani, that is, in Persian, Apostolique,” and this seems to be the first Persian word to appear, in script, in an English publication. All the words were repeated in an index at the end (Fig. 1). The printer was William Stansby of London who produced a second edition in 1631, using slightly larger blocks, with a few improvements and some extra titles, including BADASHT, MIRAZ and SHAH.3

Meanwhile, in 1625 the same printer produced a four-volume set of the famous compendium of travel literature by Samuel Purchas, Purchas his pilgrimage.4 The first volume included a table of exotic alphabets, “cut in Brasse or Wood,” one of which is “Persian,”5 but its somewhat grotesque and misshapen Arabic letters do not include any specifically Persian ones. Further on, however, is a much better engraved reproduction of a Mughal seal, with Persian names within circular panels, in a recognizable nastaliq.6

The first use of Arabic movable metal types in England was also by Stansby for Selden in 1635,7 but the main impetus for scholarly publishing in non-European languages came from William Laud (1573–1645), who was both Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of the University of Oxford. He ordered the acquisition of punches and matrices for Arabic types from Leiden in the Netherlands. These were all, of course, in the naskh style of script; Persian nastaliq was beyond the capabilities for the early punch-cutters, even if the level of demand had warranted it. A number of these new types were what is known as “portmanteau” sorts, which include all the possible dots, leaving the printer to file off some of them, as required, to create types for letters such as b, t, n, j, k, etc.8 This obviously unsatisfactory practice was the bugbear of Arabic and Persian typography in 17th-century England and elsewhere. On the other hand, its flexibility allowed the cutting and casting of Persian letters, with extra dots, which might otherwise have been uneconomical in relation to the level of demand.

The first use of types cast from these matrices was by the Oxford scholar John Greaves (1602–52) who was one of the first two Englishmen to make a serious study of Persian. About 1640 he wrote a Persian grammar, but was frustrated to find that he could not get it published for lack of types.9 He was, however, a mathematician and astronomer as well as being an Orientalist, and in 1643 was appointed Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford. In the ensuing years, despite being ejected from his chair during the Civil War, he completed and prepared for publication a work on astronomy by his predecessor, John Bainbridge, and to it he appended the text of the astronomical observations of the Persian astronomer Ulugh Beg. This was the first printing in Oxford using Arabic types, and was executed by the University printer Henry Hall.10 It does not appear to use any specifically Persian sorts; but another text edited and published by Greaves the same year did include the letters ch and p. In order to obtain them, he had in January 1648 borrowed the University's Arabic matrices, and volunteered to have their defects remedied. He took them

1 Roper 1985.
4 Purchas 1625.
5 Purchas 1625.
6 Ibid., 1:185.
7 Ibid., 3:591.
8 Roper 1985, 13.
9 Morison 1967, 241. Morison's observations are based on an examination of the original punches.
10 Greaves 1649, f.1A2 (Dedication to Selden): “Nobis annus agitum . . . ex quo haece Rudimenta Linguae Persicae in publicam lucem ederent in animam indassent. Sed typis desistit ut eum laborum differendum judicaret”; see also Birch 1737, xxviii; Arberry 1942, 10; and Reed 1952, 59.
to London, had new matrices made for some defective letters (and for the Persian ones), and then had a new font cast (or, probably, more than one), including a new set of Arabic/Persian numerals (the Fig. 4 is the Persian shape).

These Arabic/Persian types were then used by the London printers Miles Flesher and his son James Flesher to print five Persian books written or edited by Greaves, including two tables of longitude and latitude (zij) by Nasir al-Din Tusi and Ulugh Beg, which were published in 1648. In the same year he appeared his long-delayed Persian grammar, *Elementa Linguae Persicae*, dated 1649 and printed by James Flesher, which exhibits a full Persian alphabet (Fig. 2). To it was appended *Anonymus Perssæ De sigillis Arabum & Persarum astronomicæ*, dated 1648 and printed by Miles Flesher. Then in 1650 Greaves went on to publish yet another Persian astronomical text, that of Mahmud Shih Khalili, and also yet more from Ulugh Beg: *Maqâlah dar ma'rîfah-i tawâriikh*. This latter, dedicated to the Venetian Republic (perhaps as an oblique gesture to the new republican regime in England), was his most substantial Persian text, consisting of 52 pages (not including the facing Latin translation). Like the grammar, it uses the full alphabet, including p, ch, and g (three dots); but there are some curiously solecistic typographical features such as the substitution of an undotted isolated q for v, and, most incongruous of all, the separation of the initial ch of the word chiin, which starts the text, and its enclosure in a decorative foliated panel in the manner of European-language printing of the period. Both these 1650 publications were also printed in London by James Flesher, still using types from the Oxford/Leiden matrices. Greaves died two years later, in 1652.

The 1650s—the republican period—were somewhat fallow years for Oxford scholarship. Little appeared there in Oriental languages during this time, and nothing, as far as can be ascertained, in Persian. But after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, another Oxford Orientalist, Thomas Hyde (1636–1703), composed a number of Persian verses which he contributed to the frequent volumes of poems published to celebrate royal occasions. These made use of the same basic Leiden font, but with a number of extra sorts for Persian which may possibly have been cut and cast by De Walpergen, a type-founder employed by Bishop Fell, the great promoter of University printing in Oxford after the Restoration. Among his plans was an edition of *The History of Tamerlan* in Persian, but this seems never to have been published. However, one authority suggests that these additional types may have been made for Hyde in London before the establishment of the Oxford foundry. However that may be, they appear in a specimen of several sorts of letters given to the University by Dr. John Fell, which includes “a supplement to the Arabick alphabet, to print any thing in the Persian, Turkish, and Malayans languages” (Fig. 3). They include p, ch, zh, g (with three dots) and h with *hamza*. Some of them, however, especially the initial p, are poorly cut and of a clumsy and disjointed appearance. In addition to the royal poems, Hyde also published in 1665 an edition of the tables of longitude and latitude by Ulugh Beg called *Jadavîl-i muvâqâ'-i *šâvâbit dar fâl va 'uzâz*, in which these types were used by Henry Hall, who had earlier printed Greaves’s text of Ulugh Beg.

Along with John Greaves, the other founding father of Persian studies in England was the Cambridge scholar Abraham Whelock (1593–1653), a versatile man who was also the University Librarian and held the newly created lectureships of both Arabic and Anglo-Saxon. He translated the Gospels into Persian and saw them through the press in London, where they were published posthumously in 1657. Like most of Greaves’s Persian works, they were printed by James Flesher, using the Leiden/Oxford types, with p and ch, but no g. The edition was financed by Sir Thomas Adams, founder of the Arabic lectureship (later chair) in Cambridge.

Whelock was also involved in the early stages of another Biblical edition, the famous London Polyglot of Brian Walton, the first volume of which...
was published in 1653, and which was completed in five volumes in 1657. It was printed by Thomas Roycroft (although James Flesher had printed the original prospectus and specimen), and was the first of the great Polyglots to include a Persian text: Pentateuch and Gospels. A new type was cut and cast for this work, and in appearance it is quite different from the Leiden/Oxford type-face, being generally clearer and more elegant in style. It is also larger, of Great Primer size, and is in fact modeled on that of Savary de Brèves, used in the great Paris Polyglot of 1645, which Walton’s version was designed to rival. (The Paris Polyglot, however, contained no Persian). The same types were used for Walton’s *Introductio ad lectumionem linguarum orientalium*, which has a section entitled “Introductio ad lectumionem linguarum Persicæ” in which the full font is used, including p, ch, zh, and g (with three dots). They also appear in *Sol Angliae orens auspiciis Caroli II regum gloriosissimi*, a volume of odes to celebrate the restoration of the monarchy and to ingratiate the Polyglot scholars, previously patronized by Cromwell, with the new King, Charles II. On folios D1v and D2v is a “Carmen Persicum” (Fig. 4) in which Charles is hailed as *Pādishāh ba Injīlāštān*. This volume was likewise printed by Roycroft who was rewarded by being appointed as the King’s printer in the Oriental languages.

The editor of this latter volume was another Cambridge scholar, Edmund Castell (1606–85), whose magnum opus was the great *Lexicon heptaglotton*, a dictionary of seven languages, including Persian, using the Polyglot types. The Persian section, attributed to the great Dutch scholar Jacobus Gallius along with Castell, displays a full alphabet, including g (with three dots). In Cambridge itself, Arabic printing came rather later, and the first Persian text to appear, as far as can be ascertained, was a “Carmen Persicum” by C. Wright, included in a volume entitled *Academiae Cantabrigiensis carmina*. This was printed in 1702 by the University Press, using Arabic types borrowed from the Cambridge printer John Hayes. This 10-line poem was very badly typeset, with wrong letter-forms, and I confused with *alif* in a number of places.

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32 Reed 1952, 158.
33 Darlow and Moule 1903–11, 2:24, no. 1446.
34 Krek 1971, 20.
35 French diplomat, Orientalist and typographer, d. 1627. His celebrated Arabic font was acquired by the Imprimerie Royale in Paris.
36 Walton 1655, 85–95.
37 Castell 1660.
38 Plomer 1907, 158.
39 Castell 1669.
40 Cf. Forster 1982, 160; McKenzie 1966, 37, 238–9, no. 74.
41 An apology is also given for the use of Arabic in place of Persian letters, for lack of types. Rather better produced was Simon Ockley’s *Introductio ad linguas orientales*, which discusses Persian briefly, and quotes the words *Chin-i Pāk* (using correct Persian letters), which Ockley criticizes as a rendering of “Holy Spirit” in the Polyglot Bible. Both these Cambridge books made use of types modeled, like the Oxford ones, on Dutch originals, and probably of Dutch provenance. But nothing else in Persian, it seems, was printed in Cambridge for the next hundred years or more.

Until the 18th century, the possibilities for printing and publishing Persian texts in England were very restricted, as can be seen from the foregoing survey. This was mainly for economic and financial reasons, since producing the necessary fonts and setting texts with them was expensive. Although there was a growing interest in the study of foreign languages, including Oriental ones, in this period, the demand for Persian texts was still quite low. The universities had no funds to subsidize such editions, and wealthy churchmen, who did sometimes sponsor books in Arabic, for evangelical use among the Arab Christians, or for elucidation of Biblical texts, were generally less interested in Persian. A scholar of substantial private means, like John Greaves, could and did pay to have his works printed, but this was exceptional. Others, like Whelock, could not afford such expense.

In the mid-18th century, however, there was a significant change. The expansion of British commerce and conquest in India brought a substantial new interest in Persian, which was the official and court language of the Mughal empire and many of its successor states. British merchants, administrators and military officers bound for India needed to learn the language, and then to read some of the literature in order to gain a knowledge of the culture of the peoples with whom they had to deal. So there was a new demand for books containing Persian texts, both elementary and for more advanced reading. There was also a new interest in Persian historical works relating to India (and Afghanistan).
This demand was met partly by straightforward commercial publishing, including some in places such as Bristol and Newcastle, outside the established centers of scholarly publishing (London, Oxford, and Cambridge); and partly by the sponsorship of publications by the East India Company itself. This led to the development of new type-faces, including eventually the short-lived nasta’liq fonts, which were in turn displaced by Indian and Iranian lithographic texts in the 19th century. But that is another story.
A Specimen of the Persia Language.


A Specimen of the Turkif Language.

Fig. 3. Sample of Persian and other types. A specimen of several sorts of letters given to the University by Dr. John Fell, Oxford, 1613, f.d2. Cambridge University Library: Broxbourne c.39. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library
Fig. 4. Persian ode to celebrate the restoration of the English monarchy. Thomas Roycroft. *Sol Angliae orienis auspiciis Caroli II regum gloriosissimi*, London, 1660, f.Dlv. Cambridge University Library: Broxbourne d.97. By permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.
The Waning of Indo-Persian Lexicography: Examples from Some Rare Books and Manuscripts of the Subcontinent

John R. Perry*


By the latter part of the 13th/19th century, Persianate lexicography had become an Indian cottage industry, and in educated court circles (which had been growing in number) virtually an obsession. Amateur poets and antiquarians of all classes burned the midnight oil compiling glossaries and lexicons, with or without patronage; almost every library in India and Pakistan, from Madras to Hyderabad, Lahore to Peshawar, preserves several of these minor

* I would like to acknowledge my gratitude for research awards from the American Institute of Indian Studies in 1990, and the American Institute of Pakistan Studies in 1995, which enabled me to examine manuscripts and books mentioned here.
IRAN AND IRANIAN STUDIES

Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar

EDITED BY KAMBIZ ESLAMI

ZAGROS
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EDITOR'S NOTE

For over fifty years, Iraj Afshar has been writing and publishing on Iran. The sheer volume of his output (more than 130 books, 500 articles, and growing) is prodigious and its impact on current and future studies on Iran is indisputable. Sometimes as a bibliographer, sometimes as an editor or a publisher, but always as a resourceful scholar, he has made tremendous contributions in such fields as Persian manuscripts and bibliographies, Timurid, Safavid, and Qajar history, as well as local histories of Iran. He has been the editor of several important periodicals, one of which, Farhang-i Iran zamin, is still active.1 Most students of Iranian studies are indebted to his informative and illuminating work in one way or another.

The twenty-two essays gathered in this volume represent a sincere acknowledgment of the importance of Iraj Afshar’s body of work, and a mark of respect for a truly remarkable scholar of Iranian studies. As some of the contributions are actually based on, or closely related to, specific projects carried out by Iraj Afshar,2 they also attest to the wide-ranging and significant effect of his work. The scope of the essays reflects as diverse a scope as Ustād’s own interests and achievements, and ranges over such general rubrics as Iranian historiography (Melville), local history (de Blois), foreign relations (Piemontese, Matthee, Vahman, Floor, Savory), fine arts and cultural studies (Soucek, de Foucauld, Estami, Haarmann, Soudavar, Blair, Ghanoonparvar, Robinson, Witam, Roper), as well as political, literary, and linguistic studies (Afary, Clinton, Lazard, Perry, Sprachman). Mainly because of this varied makeup, I found another form of presentation (one based on a more-or-less chronological order of the subject matters covered) to be more appropriate.

1 Periodically, he was the editor, co-editor, or managing editor of Mihr (1331–2 Sh./1942–4), Sahran (1332–6 Sh./1953–7), Kātibhā-yi mab (1334–40 Sh./1955–61), Rāhmanā-ye khit (1337–57 Sh./1958–78), Nūkhavāh ha-yi khāt (1339–62 Sh./1960–83), Irānshāhāz (1349–50 Sh./1970–1), and Ayandah (1358–72 Sh./1979–94).
The transliteration system used here for Persian and Arabic words is that of the Library of Congress. Non-Roman place and proper names have in general been transliterated, with very few exceptions (e.g., Tehran for Tibrân; or Iraj Afshar for Iraj Afshâr). Vernacular terms and honorific titles have also been transliterated according to the specific context in which they appear, so the reader will find vezîr, vezîr, and vezîr appearing where the text refers to Persian, Arabic, and Turkish chief ministers, respectively. Throughout the book, an oblique stroke is used to separate the Hijri date from its Christian equivalent. Where only a Christian date was available or known, corresponding Hijri date(s) was/were supplied following the stroke.

I am deeply grateful to all the authors of the essays for their support and willingness in participating in this project. My thanks go also to Svât Soucek who translated the contributions by C.-H. de Foucheâour and Angelo Piemontese, and to Mark Farrell who made very helpful stylistic suggestions for some of the essays. I would also like to thank Ehsan Yarshater, Heath Lowry, Hossein Modarressi, Bernard O’Kane, Farhad Eslami, Yahyâ Žâkâ, Mark Becker, and Heshmat Mousyad, whose assistance is acknowledged at appropriate points in the book. I am particularly thankful to Farhad who also compiled a bibliography of Iraj Afshar and was gracious enough to allow me to include only a selection of it here. Karim Emami, Jochen Twele, and Fred Plank helped me to have access to certain resources, and Maryam Zandi kindly provided the photograph of Iraj Afshar. I am indebted to Jalâl Matini who was extremely helpful in answering my questions about two very difficult Persian texts. Finally, for giving so willingly of her expertise to help design the format of the volume, I am very grateful to Marion Carty.

Kambiz Eslami
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For a full description of those schemes, see ALA-LC romanization tables: transliteration schemes for non-Roman scripts, Washington, 1997, pp. 10–9, 171–7. One minor deviation from the LC scheme for Persian transliteration is the interchangeable usage of w and v in certain titles and poetic citations.

Considerations of space and balance forced me to limit the bibliography to titles published in book format and in monographic collections of articles, as well as those published in the journal Farhang-i Iran zamin.