PRESENTING THE MANUSCRIPT

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A KURDISH VERSE VERSION OF ŞA'H-NAMA FROM MALEK NATIONAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

From the beginning of the 19th century, some Persian poets played a secondary part in the development of Kurdish literature, oral and written [1]. The number known was relatively small, but one at least was inevitably familiar: Firdawsi. Now, the importance of Şuhür-nama and Persian writing to Kurdish writers was no sudden occurrence but the result of a long process that had begun nearly 110—120 years before the 19th century, when the first Göranî and Kurdish translations of Firdawsi's principal Şuhür-nama were completed (in 1690) [2]. The 19th century, indeed, witnessed the appearance, in the field of epic and lyric literature, of a number of texts translated from Persian, following on certain epic and lyric writings of the same provenance. In any case, we shall not here try to show the effects of these Göranî and Kurdish translations varied in character and in depth. We also shall not attempt a detailed study of their history (or what is known of it; many points are still obscure); certain essential characteristics must however be brought out. We shall confine ourselves, needless to say, only to the presentation of the Kurdish manuscript of K İ b-i J awähi r pîsh "The Book of Jawähi r pîsh" — an 18th century version of an episode of Şuhür-nama that has been preserved for years in the collection of the Malek National Library and Museum.

Malek National Library and Museum is situated in Tehran, Hāj ʿAqīq Aqīq Malik (1971—1972), son of Hāj Muhammad Khān, was the founder and the collector of the manuscripts of the Library [3]. The Malek Library accumulated a series of wonderful Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts (totally 19,000 MSS) connected with the traditional culture of Iran and the Middle East. Among those especially worth mentioning are manuscripts of al-Layl bi al-ṣayyab by Ibn Hujta, dated AH 416; al-Fad al-ṣüllar by Ibn Mūsīdān, dated AH 410; treatises of al-Ṭāhrit, dated AH 463, Murūj al-ṣāḥib by Mašrūd, dated AH 617, ʿAraFee al-ṣāḥib wa ʿarāFee al-ṭāfee by Daqiq, dated AH 1024, etc [4]. Also, at the "Malek Public Library" — as the Malek National Library and Museum was called in the early years — an extensive collection of diverse items including 42,800 volumes of rare publications (both the lithography and the typography), numismatic collections (both pre-Islamic and Islamic), and stamp collections was acquired, which was gathered by the same prominent collector, Hāj ʿAqīq Aqīq Malik, and bequeathed by him to the Library and Museum [5]. As I have said before, the Library contains manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish languages, but there is also a unique unknown Kurdish manuscript of an episode of Şuhür-nama [6], which is much more original than other Kurdish versions of Şuhür-nama tales [7].

The manuscript of this work, with the name K İ b-i J awähi r pîsh "The Book of Jawähi r pîsh" is kept in the Holding Section of the Library (call No. 4616, 17×11 cm). The poet of this wajhauw is Muṣafir b. Ṝāḥīb ʿAqīq Malik, a Kurdish Sunniite litterateur of the 18th century, who is difficult to attribute to any Kurdish family or tribe [8]. The manuscript certainly was brought from Iranian Kurdistan, possibly Gorgan district, to Tehran by Hāj ʿAqīq Aqīq Malik in 1952 [9], but its exact repository is still unknown. The manuscript is written in a type of šuhurname, maṭla in the old Gorgan dialect [10] by a professional scribe, Bahram Mīrzā Hazīk [sic], son of Abūl Khaṣṣāl Khān. The manuscript is of 197 folios and the text takes up both sides of the folio, with 13 lines on each side; it is organized in two columns. There are some crossed-out words, letters, and words written above the lines, which were left out or did not fit in the line. The binding is European, of black leather. The pagination is late, and Eastern. There are two imprints of owners (i. e. Library) seals (fol. 1r). The paper is of European manufacture. Most of the manuscript is written with black ink, but individual titles — except the title of book, i. e. K İ b-i J awähi r pîsh (fig. 1) — are in chūfar or red ink. On the last page (fig. 2), the scribe gives the date: Shaban 13 Shahr-i Rūjav-i 1307 of the Hijra.

In this source, the "Book of Jawähi r pîsh", which we may call the epic account, it is generally related that Jawähi r pîsh, the epithet of Bahram K İ b-i Tabarzād and a descendant of Rustami, was a warrior who participated in several wars between Iran and Turan [11]. The story of the wars between Iran and Turan, which occupy many pages in Iranian epic, is repeated here by Gurrnti in his story and it gave evidently a somewhat garbled version.
of the Şahîn-nâme. Therefore an obscurity does exist about the exact relationship between Jawâhîrî and Rustam, Kay Khusraw, the Turanian king Afrâsîyab, and other Iranian and Türkman heroes. The confusions of Iran and Türkman, light and darkness, followers of Rustam and followers of Afrâsîyab, are all summed up in the Turkish version of the struggle between Iran and Türkman.

The structure of the work of Şûrûsî is as follows. At first the author gives a prose passage in Persian which contains 45 faṣas:

Inčîl (fol. 1r)
Exceɪt (fol. 17v)

Notes


2. The medieval episodes of Şûrûsî-nâmâ and the best information may be found in the writings of Antoine de Rivet, Blagovit-hâ-Şîh-nâmâ—jûf Kurdûsan (Manuscript in the Bibliothèque Belles-Lettres, Paris, 1662); Idem, Bahr-i bayân (Le règne blanc) (Paris—Louvain, 2003); M. T. al-Marîdî, Nûzûv ve İbnê Nûzûv (Théâtre de Mâmsîlî and Mâmsîlî the Younger, (The Complete Catalogue of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish MSS is given of the Malek National Library (Moscow), 1962-93), where the complete catalogue of the MSS in the Public Library and Museum is found in the Malek National Library and Museum's position and collections can be found in Analogous, Malek National Library and Museum; Affiliated to Astan Qods Razavi (Imam Riza’s) Shrine (Teherán, 1990).

3. I know of no other manuscript of Kârîm-nâmâ-yi ve Şûrûsî-nâmâ (The Malek National Library MSS (Teherán, 1982-93), where the complete catalogue of the MSS in the Malek National Library is found. There is only a microfilm of the same manuscript in Astan Qods, in Malek National Library (ML 6416). This reference is due to the amiability of Mr. F. Hâşghi, the dean of the Malek National Library and Museum and the Microfilm Collections of the Astan Qods Razavi Central Library. This is only a citation in defa-ı şabih of the library. I owe my knowledge of this point to the kindness of Mr. M. M. Kâfîrî, the dean of the library. The name of one of the manuscripts in Q. Behzadîsâz, Fîrûzî's alîh-ı sa'îdî (腼腆の歷史) ve Şûrûsî-nâmâ-yi ve Kârîm-nâmâ-yi ve Ma'bûl-nâmâ (The Alphabetical Catalogue of the Books Titles Among the MSS of the Malek National Library) (Teherân, 1997), p. 397. See the discussion in I. Bahramî, Şûrûsî-nâmâ-yi Kûrîdî (Jawâhîrî-nâmâ-yi ve Bûshân ve Mâmsîlî) (The Kurdish Şûrûsî-nâmâ (Jawâhîrî-nâmâ and Bûshân and Mâmsîlî) (Teherán, 2000), pp. 41-72.

10. This date is cited in defa-ı şabih of the library. I owe my knowledge of this point to the kindness of Mr. M. M. Kâfîrî, the dean of the library.

11. Researchers who study the world of Kurdish fiction faced with difficulty of finding an exact phrase sufficiently appropriate to Gôrân literature and Gôrân Avesta of Iranians and ‘Iraqi Kurds. The word Gôrân which is essentially linguistic term, cannot be used about such subjects as literature or history; Kurdish is unusual if one thinks of the ethnic or linguistic confutation of that word. On the Gôrân dialects see A. M. Benedicta, Les dialectes ou Avestan et de Persa (Kobenhavn, 1921); D. N. McKenzie, The Dialect of Avestan (Hervormde-Latin) (Kobenhavn, 1921); On the Gôrân dialects see A. M. Benedicta, Les dialectes ou Avestan et de Persa (Kobenhavn, 1921).

12. On the Kurdish manuscripts of Şûrûsî-nâmâ regarding the wars between Iran and Türkman see MS 9504 (i.e. Kâhêr-î Zarûhêrî, manbûna dar šûrûsî-ı jang-hâ-î İrân ve Türkman (The Book of Zarûhêrî, Compiled for Description of the Wars between Iran and Türkman), Islamic Consultative Assembly Library, Teherân.

Illustrations

Fig. 1. Maşûhî b. Mahârûd Şûrûsî, Kâhêr-î Jawâhîrî ("The Book of Jawâhîrî") (1711-12). Teherân AH 1307, Malek National Library and Museum, call No. 4616, fol. 1r. Courtesy of the library.

Fig. 2. The same MS, fol. 17rv.
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Plate 3. Qurʾān B 2. FF. 497v—498r.