
PRESENTING THE MANUSCRIPT

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A KURDISH VERSE VERSION OF SHĀH-NĀMA 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: Firdawsī. Now, the importance of *Shāh-nāma* 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 Gōranī and Kurdish translations of Firdawsī's principal *Shāh-nāma* were completed (in ca. 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 Gōranī 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 *Kitāb-i Jawāhirpūsh* “The Book of Jawāhirpūsh” — an 18th century version of an episode of *Shāh-nāma* that has been preserved for years in the collection of the Malek National Library and Museum.

Malek National Library and Museum is situated in Tehrān. Ḥāj Ḥusayn Āqā Malik (1871—1972), son of Ḥāj Muḥammad Kāzīm, 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 Īrān and the Middle East. Among those specially worth mentioning are manuscripts of *al-Uṣūl bi al-istiḡsāt* by Euclid, dated AH 343; *al-Fuz al-aṣghar* by Ibn Muskūya, dated AH 410; treatises of al-Fārābī, dated AH 463, *Murūj al-dhahab* by Mas'ūdī, dated AH 867, *'Arafāt al-'āshiqīn wa 'arāṣāt al-'arīfīn* by Daqāqī, 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 42,000 volumes of rare publications (both the lithography and the typography), numis-

matic collections (both pre-Islamic and Islamic), and stamp collections was acquired, which was gathered by the same prominent collector, Ḥāj Ḥusayn Āqā 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 *Shāh-nāma* [6], which is much more original than other Kurdish versions of *Shāh-nāma* tales [7].

The manuscript of this work, with the name *Kitāb-i Jawāhirpūsh* “The Book of Jawāhirpūsh” is kept in the Holding Section of the Library (call No. 4616, 17×11cm). The poet of this *mathnawī* is Muṣṭafā b. Maḥmūd Gūrānī, a Kurdish Sunnite *littérateur* of the 18th century, whom is difficult to attribute to any Kurdish family or tribe [8].

The manuscript certainly was brought from Īrānian Kurdistān, possibly Gōran district, to Tehrān by Ḥāj Ḥusayn Āqā Malik in 1952 [9], but its exactly depository is still unknown. The manuscript is written in a type of *shikasta nasta 'līq* in the old Gōranī dialect [10] by a professional scribe, Bahrām Mīrzā Līk [*sic*], son of 'Abbās *Khushkhān*. 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. *Kitāb-i Jawāhirpūsh* (fig. 1) — are in *shanjarf* or red ink. On the last page (fig. 2), the scribe gives the date: Shanba 13 *Shahr-i Rajab-i* 1307 of the Hijra.

In this source, the “Book of Jawāhirpūsh”, which we may call the epic account, it is generally related that Jawāhirpūsh, the epithet of Bahrām *Shāh-i Tabardār* and a descendant of Rustam, was a warrior who participated in several wars between Īrān and Tūrān [11]. The story of the wars between Īrān and Tūrān, which occupy many pages in Īrānian epic, is repeated here by Gūrānī in his story and it gave evidently a somewhat garbled version