



# PERSO-INDICA

*An Analytical Survey of Persian Works  
on Indian Learned Traditions*

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## AN ANALYTICAL SURVEY OF PERSIAN WORKS ON INDIAN LEARNED TRADITIONS

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*‘Ayn al-ḥayāt (Ahmadnagar recension)*

The author, who remains anonymous, is known only as the editor who produced a new recension of the *‘Ayn al-ḥayāt*, a Persian text on yoga and divination adapted from the *Ḥawz al-ḥayāt*, which was translated from the Arabic version of the *Amṛtakunḍa*. He considered it necessary to produce the new edition because of corruption of the language of the text. The only detail he reveals is that his activity took place in Ahmadnagar. The Ahmadnagar recension of the *‘Ayn al-ḥayāt* begins with a brief praise of God and praise of the Prophet (including two *matnavī* verses in Persian). It then proceeds abruptly into a prolix account by an unnamed person who revised the existing version of *‘Ayn al-ḥayāt* transmitted by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Razzāq. This account claims that this Persian translation was in wide circulation, and that the text was prized as a source for divination. The anonymous editor, who was at the time in the Deccan city of Ahmadnagar, describes himself as participating in a process of ongoing revision, which was already present in the text in the form of numerous marginal glosses in Arabic and Persian.

This recension adds a number of new elements to the story of the original Arabic version. The figure who introduces the text to Muslims, Bhūjū, is no longer called a yogi but is now a pandit and brahmin, a learned member of caste Hindu society rather than an independent ascetic. His itinerary has changed markedly, since Assam or Kamarupa (along with the Bengal city of Gaur) is now his initial destination rather than his homeland. He lives there at the moment of transition from Hindu to Muslim rule, though the name of the Hindu ruler is indistinct and hard to relate to any of the last Sena kings of Bengal. He has acquired a host of miraculous powers. The name of the new Turkish ruler has been changed from ‘Alī Mardān to Murād, and the entire discussion of scripture has been omitted. The editor has also conflated the story of the first translation into Arabic with the Persian translation of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-

Razzāq, making the latter into an assistant to Rukn al-Dīn Samarqandī. The name of the ruler to whom the Persian translation was dedicated has been changed from Abū Bakr ibn Mas'ūd to Mūsā ibn Mas'ūd. As in the case of the first recension, the story of the second Arabic translator and both frame stories have been omitted from the introduction (although the conclusion of the “Hymn of the Pearl” story is preserved in chapter 10). With its new mythologizing additions and its telescoping of the translation process, this recension further domesticates the yoga text into the Perso-Islamic world. In other respects, the Ahmadnagar recension loosely follows the *'Ayn al-ḥayāt* of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Razzāq, in terms of its text and overall organization into ten chapters. It also truncates the ninth chapter so that the yogini goddesses are effectively eliminated. Chapter 4 only offers four of the 84 *āsana* postures instead of the usual five.

**Manuscript:** Islamabad, Ganj Bakhsh 745/19, pp. 230-247, ii) 1500-1550, vii) this nineteenth copy in an anthology of Sufi texts dated to the 11th/17th-12th/18th centuries, previously catalogued as a work on incantations; a gloss on the opening page records an incipit close to the beginnings of the *Ḥawz al-ḥayāt*: حمد بید مر خدای پاک را, viii) Munzawī 1363 š./1984, vol. 3, p. 1489.

Legend: i) Place of copying; ii) Period of copying; iii) Copyist; iv) Commissioner; v) Information on colophon; vi) Description of miniatures/illustrations; vii) Other remarks; viii) Information on catalogue(s)

**Secondary sources bibliography:** Ernst, Carl W., 2019, “‘Ayn al-ḥayāt”, *Perso-Indica. An Analytical Survey of Persian Works on Indian Learned Traditions*, F. Speziale - C. W. Ernst, eds., available at [http://www.perso-indica.net/work/ayn\\_al-hayat](http://www.perso-indica.net/work/ayn_al-hayat). **Munzawī**, Aḥmad, 1363š./1984, *Fihrist-i muštarak-i nuṣṣa-hā-yi ḥaṭṭī-yi fārsī-yi Pākistān*, Islamabad, Iran Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, vol. 3.

**Carl W. Ernst**

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