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

OFFPRINT



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is published on line at: www.perso-indica.net
ISSN: 2267-2753

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Perso-Indica

c/o Fabrizio Speziale

École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales

Centre d'études de l'Inde et de l'Asie du sud

54 Boulevard Raspail

75006, Paris

France

e-mail: fabrizio.speziale@ehess.fr

Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī

The *Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī* (Ode on Hindi terms) is a short metrical text on Indian medical terms. The Hindi and Persian terms that comprise it are arranged in forty-four verses that share a single end-rhyme, corresponding with the *qaṣīda* poetic genre. The other titles by which this work is known are *Qaṣīda ba-luġāt-i hindī* (Ode on the Indian language, Ms. London, Royal Asiatic Society, Persian Uncatalogued 6), and *Qaṣīda dar bayān-i ānki har ċīzī rā az adwiya-yi mašhūr wa ġayrahā ba-zabān-i hind ċi goyand* (Ode in explanation of how to say in Hindi all manner of famous remedies etc., Ms. Tashkent, Academy of Sciences, 1405/2, 575/6 and 11776/10). Its author, Yūsuf bin Muḥammad Yūsuf Ḥurāsānī, known by the pen name Yūsufī, was a poet and physician associated with the courts of the Mughal emperors Bābur (r. 1526-1530) and Humāyūn (r. 1531-1540 and 1555-1556). His father, Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf, was a respected physician in the court of Ṣultān Ḥusain Bayqarā (r. 1469-1506) of Herat and author of *Baḥr al-jawāhir* (Sea of jewels), an Arabic-Persian medical dictionary. Faḥrī Sultān Muḥammad of Herat describes the younger Yūsufī in his *Laṭā'if-nāma* (c. 927/1520) as “an affable, widely travelled, and well regarded man” (*mard-i ḥwūš-ḥulq wa jahān-ġašta wa ṣuḥbat-dīda*) who had authored three collections (*dīwān*) of *ġazals* (Storey 1971, p. 235). According to the *Akbar-nāma* of Abū al-Faḥl (d. 1011/1602), “Maulānā Yūsufī the physician” was “among the illustrious men, courtiers and companions” who followed Bābur from Central Asia to the new Mughal court in India (Abū al-Faḥl 2000, p. 280). Abū al-Faḥl provides little additional information beyond describing Yūsufī as having been “sent for from Ḥurāsān” and “distinguished for good qualities, for dexterity as an operator and for assiduity” (Abū al-Faḥl, 2000, pp. 280-281). A few years after Bābur’s death, in 940/1533-1534, Yūsufī prepared a collection of belles-lettres, the *Badā’i’ al-inšā’* (Wonders of letter-writing), for his son and other students (Sachau - Ethé 1889, p. 836; Storey 1990, p. 270). A recent bibliography gives 950/1543 as the year of his death

(Munzavī, 1969, p. 265), though this is not supported by any contemporary source (see Azmi 2003, p. 15, n. 26).

Several scholars have surmised that the same Yūsufī may have compiled the *Riyāz al-adwiyā* (Gardens of remedies) in 946/1539 and dedicated it to the Mughal Emperor Humāyūn (Elgood 1951, pp. 378-379; Verma 1970, p. 355; Siddiqi 1981, p. 23; Storey 1971, p. 240). Yūsufī's earliest recorded work, *Risāla-i ma'kūl wa mašrūb* (Treatise on [items] eaten and drunk), was written in Herat nearly four decades earlier in 906/1501-1502 (Ḥabībī 1948, p. 3). The *Jāmi' al-fawā'id* (Collection of benefits) was completed in 910/1504-1505; several manuscripts provide a 917/1511-1512 as the date of completion (see Ethé 1903, p. 1261; Šīrānī 1944a, p. 7; Sachau - Ethé, 1889 p. 960; Storey 1971, pp. 237-238; Ms. London, Royal Asiatic Society, Persian Uncatalogued 6). Yūsufī probably prepared the *Qaṣīda* following his arrival in India (Hakala 2015, pp. 226-227; for more on the life of Yūsufī, see also Verma 1970, p. 355; Siddiqi 1981, p. 23; Bosworth - Berthels 2002; Berthels 1987; Azmi 2003, pp. 3-9).

The *Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī* belongs to a longer tradition of multilingual Persian medical vocabularies: Abū Bakr ibn 'Alī bin 'Uṭmān al-Kāšānī's Persian translation in 611/1214 of al-Bīrūnī's (973-1048) Arabic-language *Kitāb al-ṣaydala fī al-ṭibb* (Book on the pharmacopœia of medicine) “provides equivalent names for most of the herbs and minerals in Arabic, Greek, Syriac, Jurjani, Khvarazmi, Persian, Hindi, and Sindhi” (Alam 2003, p. 142). The *Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī* has typically been included as an early example of the *niṣāb* genre of multilingual vocabularies in verse, common to the literatures of Persian, Urdu, Panjabi, Pashto, and Arabic, among other South Asian languages, with Sanskrit analogues originating in the early centuries CE (Alam 2003, p. 142). The *Niṣāb al-ṣibyān* (The Portion of Youths, completed in 617/1220-21), from which the genre derives its name, is considered to have inaugurated the genre and provides Persian equivalents to Arabic terms (Farāhī 1923; Āh 1966, p. 66). By devoting 44 of its 200 total verses to descriptions of different Arabic and Persian meters, it also served as a primer for children on Perso-Arabic prosody.

The first verse of the *Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī* suggests it to have been intended for a Persian-speaking youth seeking to learn “the names of all things in Hindi”: *nām-i har čīzī ba-hindī bišnau az man ay pīsar / ḥāṣṣa nām-i har dawā'ī naf' bar dārī magar* // “Listen, oh son, to the names of all things in Hindi / But benefit from each

remedy's special name." While Yūsufī exclusively employs Persian as his glossing metalanguage, later authors of Indo-Persian *niṣābs* increasingly employed Hindi-Urdu as their glossing metalanguage, suggesting that later *niṣābs* were intended for those more familiar with Hindi-Urdu as a spoken language and written Persian as the target language (Hakala 2015, pp. 223-227). The third distich introduces a six-verse set on parts of the body: *jīb wa kān amad* [for *āmad*] *zabān wa guš wa d'ārī rīš dān / mūč-rā mī-ḥyān burūt wa kāna kūr wa bahra kar*, "jīb and kān are 'tongue' and 'ear', and know *dārī* [for *dārīhī*] [as] 'beard' / Call 'moustache' *mūč* [for *mūčh*] and *kāna* [*kānā*] 'blind', and *bahra* [for *bahrā*] 'deaf.'" After the tenth verse, the topics that Yūsufī explores become more varied: verse ten lists domesticated beasts ('sheep', 'he-goat', 'camel', etc.); verses eleven to fourteen, foods ('meat', 'bread', 'fenugreek', etc.); verses fifteen and sixteen, luxury items ('silk', 'collyrium', 'aloeswood', 'pearl', etc.); verse seventeen, qualities and quantities ('little', 'many', 'bad', 'good'); and verse nineteen, weaving and travel ('warp', 'spider's web', 'travel provisions', 'travel'). From verse twenty, a series of distiches devoted to medicinal plant products are punctuated with verses on insects (twenty-seven), fruits and vegetables (twenty-nine to thirty-one), milk products/fire (thirty-two), grains/robbery (thirty-three), metals/foods (thirty-seven), grains (thirty-nine), home/parental relationships (forty), times of day/sun and moon (forty-one), and weather (forty-two), before finishing with the concluding verses (forty-three and forty-four), containing the author's pen name and a promise to the reader: *yūsufī bahr-at darīn abyāt kardast ānčih dīkr / gar kunī az bar turā har dam rasad naf'ī digar // az zarar dārad madāmat dar panāh-i ḥyēštan / ānkih dar 'ālam ba-taqdīraš buwad naf' wa zarar //*, "What Yūsufī has done for you in these verses, if you remember it / From the heart, each moment another benefit will reach you // He has safety from harm forever in his own refuge / Whose worldly harm and benefit is by divine decree."

As the final two verses of the *Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī* attest, the author's Persian is as one would expect: fluent and typical of its time. His representation of *hindawī* terms, however, is idiosyncratic and accounts for the majority of variations in the manuscripts. The last letter of the term *mūč* for Hindi *mūčh*, 'moustache') from verse three, for example, though orthographically represented as چ (the letter *jim* of Persian alphabet) is pronounced with aspiration. Vowel length (e.g., *bahūt* for *bahut*, 'many', verse seventeen; *lun* for *loṅ* or *lūn*, 'salt', verse twenty-four), retroflex consonants (e.g., *tīkrī* for *tikṛī*, 'hog-weed', verse twenty-one), aspiration (e.g., *metī* for *methī*,

‘fenugreek’, verse eleven; *meh* for *megh*, ‘cloud’, in verse twenty-two), and other sounds (e.g., *fīndukī* for *pinḍukī*, ‘turtle-dove’, verse eighteen; *bardes* for *pardes*, ‘foreign country’, verse nineteen; *gazar* for *gajar* or *gājar*, ‘carrot’, verse twenty) are recorded in forms that differ markedly from modern orthography.

There is significant overlap of lexical content between the *Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī* and the *Ḥāliq bārī* (see below), especially for terms referring to foods, medicinal plants, and parts of the body. The first hemistich of the *Qaṣīda*’s twenty-first verse, for example, appears in the Istanbul manuscript as: *herā* [for *herā*] *lahm wa rotī* [for *rotī*] *wa pānī ast nān wa āb hast*, “*herā* is ‘meat’, and *rotī* and *pānī* are ‘bread and water.’” An eighteenth-century manuscript of the *Ḥāliq bārī* (Ms. London, British Library Ms. IO Islamic 1200) includes many of the same glosses: *gūšt herā čarm čamarā šaḥm pih* (for *pīh*) / “‘Meat’ is *herā*; ‘hide’, *čamarā*; ‘fat’, *pih*.” / *nān ba-tāzī ḥubz rotī* (for *rotī*) *hindawī* // “‘Bread’ in Arabic is *ḥubz*, (in) *Hindawī*, *rotī*” / *ātiš āg āb hai pānī* (for *pānī*) / “‘Fire’ is *āg*; ‘water’ is *pānī*.” Like the *Ḥāliq bārī*, the *Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī* betrays no awareness of New World flora. Verses fifteen and twenty-three list two Old World varieties of *filfil* - the ‘long’ (*filfil-i darāz* or *dār filfil*) and the ‘round’ - but make no mention of the American *Capsicum annuum* - the ‘red’ or ‘chili’ pepper (see also Hakala forthcoming).

Yūsufī sometimes seeks to identify functional analogues among the medically useful plants of India rather than the precise genetic homologues of the flora available in Central Asia. In verse twenty-six, the red and black seeds of *Abrus precatorius* (Hindi *ghuṅčī*) is equated with a Central Asian tuber (*bahman*), the *Centaurea behen*, a plant whose roots share with the Indian *ghuṅčī* seeds the distinction of having both red and white varieties: *sahgun wa asgun-čih bāšad bahman-i surḥ wa safīd* / “*sahgun* (for *kūnč* or *gūnč*) and *asgun-čih* (for *ghuṅčī*) shall be the red and white *bahman*.” These lexical equations show on a micro scale a broader pattern of Muslim medical practitioners’ efforts to comprehend and disseminate Indian systems of medicine through Persian-language texts (see Speziale 2014, 2018).

It is commonly believed that prior to Yūsufī’s *Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī*, Amīr Ḥusraw of Delhi (d. 725/1325) authored a versified vocabulary of synonymous terms from Arabic, Persian, and what the text calls *hindawī* or *prākṛit*. This vocabulary is most commonly known as *Ḥāliq bārī* (Creator and Originator) from the two Arabic terms among the ninety-nine so-called *šifāt allāh* (epithets of Allāh), both meaning

“creator”, with which it commences in most manuscript copies. Though doubts about the authorship of the work have persisted (most notably voiced by Šrānī 1944b), subsequent scholarship suggests that a core set of verses must have originated prior to the seventeenth century (Āh 1966, p. 81; Ḥusain 1975, p. 363; Nārang 1987, pp. 129-131; Hakala 2014; Hakala, forthcoming). The *Hāliq Bārī* follows the *Niṣāb al-ṣibyān* in employing a variety of meters but in distiches with varying rhymes. Following the precedent set by the *Niṣāb al-ṣibyān*, early manuscripts of the *Hāliq bārī* generally contain at least two hundred verses. The latter text’s use of both Hindi and Persian as glossing languages, inconsistent combinations of Arabic, Persian, and Hindi synonyms (sometimes drawn from a single language without a gloss in a second language), and lack of a thematically coherent macrostructure have added to the obscurity of its origins.

The *Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī*, in contrast, employs a single meter and constant rhyme in the second hemistich of each verse. The *Qaṣīda* is thus anomalous: subsequent *niṣābs* did not adopt Yūsufī’s choice of the *qaṣīda*’s monorhymed form, reverting instead to the looser structure of a *maṭnavī*’s varying rhymes. The lone exception is that Yūsufī himself prepared at least one other multilingual vocabulary in *qaṣīda* form: the *Qaṣīda dar bayān-i adwiya* consists mostly of Persian and Arabic terms, glossing the occasional Indic term as well (e.g., verse seventeen: *ba-zabān-i ‘ajam buwad tambūl / pān keh bū’ihā’ī bad burd az dahān* “In the language of ‘ajam [foreigners] shall be *tambūl* [Pers., betel-leaf] / *pān* [Hindi, betel-leaf] which removes bad odors from the mouth”). These greater stringencies of form explain both the shorter length and greater textual stability of Yūsufī’s *Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī*.

Manuscripts of the *Qaṣīda* are known to exist in Istanbul, London, Lahore, Patna, Tashkent, and Teheran (this author has consulted digital images of the first two only). The multilingual nature of the text has, however, posed substantial challenges for would-be copyists. A manuscript held in the Wellcome Library (Ms. London, Wellcome Library, Pers. 292/D) apparently consists of the first three lines only (Keshavarz 1986, p. 96). The copyist of the Royal Asiatic Society manuscript (Ms. London, Royal Asiatic Society, Persian Uncat 6) was not able to decipher the first pair of terms referring to bamboo-manna - a tonic for the respiratory diseases - appearing in the first hemistich of verse thirty-four: the text appears in the Istanbul manuscript as *binzojan* (for Hindi *bañs-ločān*) *dān ṭabāšīr* (“know that *bañs-ločān* is *ṭabāšīr*”). This copyist similarly neglects the second hemistich of the following verse

(thirty-five), which the more intrepid copyist of the Istanbul manuscript (Ms. Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye 34 Nk 3495/7) represents as *gu'ī tukhm-i khurfa-rā lūnīka paṣ wa bar guḍar* (Call 'seed of purslane' *lūnīka paṣ* [for Hindi *lūniyā pushpa*, lit. 'purslane flower'?), and pass it by). Though he does not identify his source, Ḥāfiẓ Māḥmūd Šīrānī probably consulted the Lahore manuscript (Ms. Lahore, Punjab University Library, Šīrānī Collection, 4466/1416/4) for the twenty-one verses he reproduced in a 1933 journal article (see Šīrānī 1985, pp. 24-26; Ḥusain 1969, p. 394). The *Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī* continues to be of great interest both for its equation of *materia medica* from two different medical traditions and its distinctive orthographic representation in the Perso-Arabic script of terms drawn from a northern Indian language.

Manuscripts: **Istanbul**, Nuruosmaniye 34 Nk 3495/7, ff. 86b-87b, **viii**) *Türkiye Yazmalarları*. **Lahore**, Punjab University Library, Šīrānī Collection, 4466/1416/4, **ii**) 1835-1836, **vii**) included in *Rasā'il-i Yūsufī*, a collection of treatises by 'Yūsufī' preserved in the Šīrānī Collection in Lahore, this forms the basis for Šīrānī's published text, Šīrānī 1985, pp. 24-26, **viii**) Storey 1971, p. 239; Ḥusain, 1969, p. 494. **London**, Royal Asiatic Society, Persian Uncat 6, ff. 2b-4a, **ii**) 1227/1812-1813, **v**) the year 1227/1812-1813 is given at the end of another item in the same codex (*Qaṣīda dar ḥifẓ-i ṣiḥḥat*). A colophon at the end is dated 18 Ramadan 917/9 December 1515 and gives Kashmir as the place of completion. According to Sandy Morton, the cataloguer, "This evidently belongs to the original composition [i.e., *Qaṣīda dar ḥifẓ-i ṣiḥḥat*] rather than the present MS." The *Qaṣīdah dar luġāt-i hindī* in this codex bears the title *Qaṣīda ba-luġāt-i hindī*. The colophon attached to the final work in the collection, the *Jāmi' al-fawā'id* (written in a different hand than the *Qaṣīda ba-luġāt-i hindī*), gives 944/1537-1538 as the year of completion, though, again, it is unclear whether this refers to the original composition or manuscript copy, **viii**) Morton. **London**, Wellcome Library, MS. Pers. 292/D, **ii**) 13th/19th century, **vii**) 3 lines only, beginning *nām-i har čīzī bahindī bišīnau az man ay pisar*, **viii**) Keshavarz 1986, p. 96. **Patna**, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library MS 1024/III, ff. 8a-10a, **ii**) 1254/1838-1839, **vii**) also listed as HL 1013/Urdu 437 in *Khudā Bakhsh*, 1995, p. 66, **viii**) Muqtaḍir, 1927, pp. 46-49; *Khudā Bakhsh*, 1995, p. 66. **Teheran**, Kitābhāna-yi Dānišgāh, 2569/3, ff. 22v-24r, **vii**) 22v-24r.

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)

Lithograph: *Baččoṅ ke ta ‘līmī niṣāb*, Šīrānī, Ḥāfiẓ Maḥmūd, ed., Lahore, 1933, The article “Baččoṅ ke ta ‘līmī niṣāb” was originally printed in the proceedings of the first session of the Idārah-i ma‘ārif-i Islāmiya, convened in Lahore in April 1933; the 21 verses Šīrānī reproduced of the *Qaṣīda* include 17 of the first 18 verses and verses 41 to 44. Reprint: “Baččoṅ ke ta ‘līmī niṣāb”, in: Maẓhar Maḥmūd Šīrānī, ed., *Maqālāt-i Ḥāfiẓ Maḥmūd Šīrānī*, vol. 7, Lahore, Majlis-i Taraqqī-yi Urdū, 1985, pp. 24-26.

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Walter N. Hakala

Originally published: 13 juillet 2020

How to quote this article:

Hakala, Walter N., 2020, "Qaṣīda dar luġāt-i hindī", *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/qasida_dar_lugat-i_hindi-1.

ISSN: 2267-2753

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