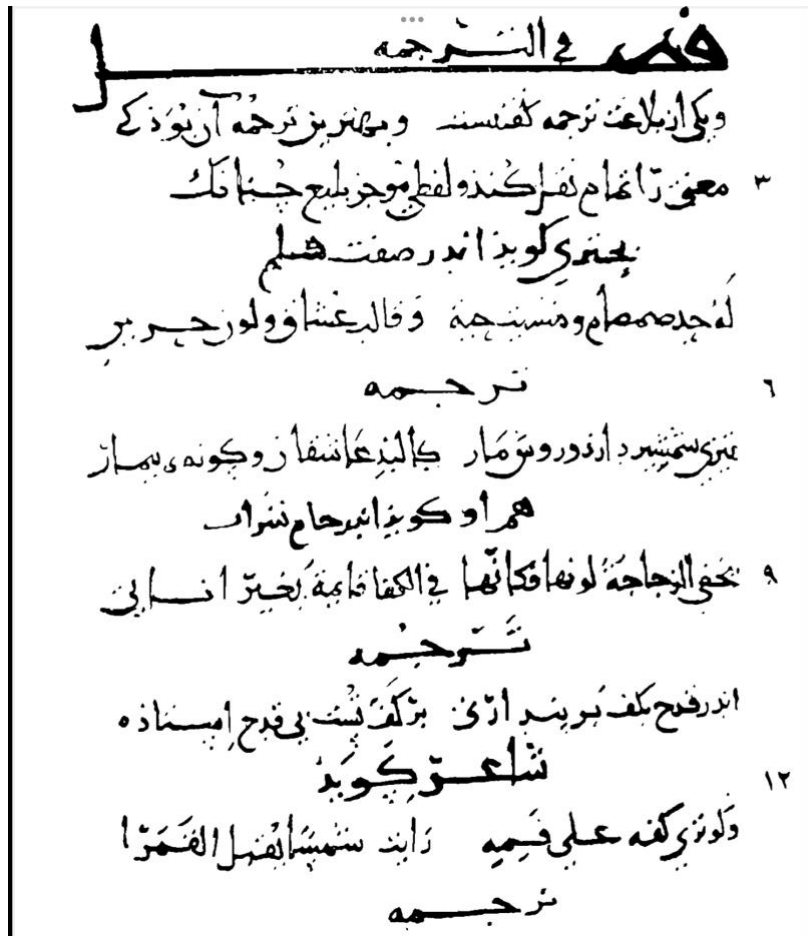


POETRY TRANSLATION AS A TROPE: *TARJAMA* IN PERSIAN POETICS



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Birmingham 2022

University of Birmingham
Global Literary Theory

Licit Magic – GlobalLit Working Papers

No. 10

Rebecca Ruth Gould, *Editor-in-Chief*

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All working papers are downloadable on <https://globallit.hcommons.org/licit-magic-working-papers/>. This series is part of a project that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement No. 759346).

Cover image: © “Chapter on *Tarjama*,” from Muḥammad bin ‘Umar Rādūyānī’s *Tarjumān al-Balāgha*, from the manuscript copied by Abū ‘l-Hayjā’ Ardashīr b. Daylamsipār al-Najmī al-Quṭbī, dated Ramadan 507/ 1114 CE), discovered by Aḥmed Ateş in 1948 in Istanbul’s central library, Fatih Kütüphanesi.

Poetry Translation as a Trope: *Tarjama* in Persian Poetics¹

In medieval Persian poetics, poetry translation was classified as a figure of speech. For modern Iranian literature, poetry translation is a development of the twentieth century. Modernist Iranian poets shaped their poetic voice directly or indirectly through translations of European poets. Pre-modern poets were less interested in translating poems than in composing poems originally in a language other than Persian. Khāqānī Shirvānī boasted of his talents in composing Arabic *qaṣidas* and *qiṭ'as*. His contemporary, Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwāt, wrote famous *mulamma*'s—poems written in a mixture of Persian and Arabic. Arabic poems are found in *Dīvāns* of Persian master poets—Sa'adī, Ḥāfīz, Rūmī, for a few names. Translated poems were rarely supported by patrons.² An example of poetry translation is “Ode on the letter ‘nūn’ [*qaṣīda-yi nūniyya*],” written by the bilingual Ghaznavid court poet, ‘Abulfath Al-Bustī, (seventh century) and translated by Badr al-Dīn Jājarmī (tenth century).

In premodern treatises of Persian poetics (*balāgha*), the term *tarjama* (meaning “translation” in Arabic and Persian) is defined rather as a literary device rather than a practice. In *Tarjuman al-balāgha*, the first known Persian treatise on rhetoric (written circa 1088-1114), Rādūyānī writes “a device of *balāgha* is telling in translation (*tarjuma guftan*). And the best translation is that which transfers/quotes the meaning (*ma'nā*) entirely in a brief (*mūjaz*) eloquent (*balīgh*) expression [*lafz*].”³ He introduces examples from the Arabic poets Buḥturī, al-A'shā, and Abū Nuwās masterfully translated into Persian verse. Each citation from Arabic is followed by a translation, and prefaced by the word *tarjama*.

For example, Buḥturī describes the poet's pen:

¹ The author wishes to thank Rebecca Ruth Gould for her valuable review and feedback.

² Azartash Azarnush, “Tarjuma-yi ash'ār-i kuhan-i fārsī bi 'arabī,” *Maqālāt va bar-rasī-hā* 69 (2001): 165-175.

³ Muḥammad b. 'Umar ar-Rādūyānī, *Tarjuman al-balāgha*, ed. Aḥmed Ateş (Tehran: Asatir, 1983), 115-127. The first English translation of this work was completed by Michelle Quay for the Global Literary Theory project.

لَهُ حَدٌّ صَنْصَامٍ وَ مَشِيَّةٌ حَيَّةٌ وَ قَالِبُ عُشَّاقٍ وَ لَوْنُ حَزِينٍ
ترجمه^۷: ۹

تیزی شمشیر دارد و زویش مار کالبذ عاشقان و گونه بیمار

As sharp as a sword, it slithers like a snake,
with the body of a lover and the cheeks of the sick.

Buḥturī also describes the wine glass:

۱۲ يُخْفِي الزُّجَاجَةَ لَوْنُهَا فَكَأَنَّهَا فِي الْكَفِّ^۹ قَائِمَةٌ بِغَيْرِ إِنَاءٍ^{۱۰}

Translation:

اندر قدح بکف بر پنداری بر کفِ توست بی قدح استاده
ترجمه^۸

In the glass held in your palm, it stands
as if without a glass in your palm.

A poet writes:

وَ لَوْ تَرَى كَفَّهُ عَلَى فَمِهِ رَأَيْتَ شَمْسًا يُقَبِّلُ الْقَمَرَا

ترجمه^۱:

۲۸۱ آ گر بر دهن نهاده بود جام پرنبید ۶
گویی ستاره بوسه دهد ماه را همی

When touching your lips, the glass full of wine:
It is as if the star kissed the moon.

al-A‘shā writes:

فَبَانَتْ^٤ وَفِي الصَّدْرِ صَدَعٌ لَهَا^٥ كَصَدَعِ الزُّجَاجَةِ مَا يُلْتَمِمْ^٦ ٩

ترجمه^٧:

جُنْ آبِغِينَهُ رِيزَانِ شَدِ اَيْنِ دَلِ اَزِ غَمِّ اَوْ
کي هر چگونه بسازم نگیرد او پیوند ١٢

Like a molten glass became this heart in grief for her:
No matter how I make up with her, she won't give in.

Another poet writes:

الشَّيْبُ كُرَةٌ وَ كُرَةٌ^١ أَنْ يُفَارِقَنِي
أَعْجِبْ بِشَيْءٍ^٢ عَلَى الْبَغْضَاءِ مَوْدُودٌ^٣

ترجمه^٤: ٣

پيري را دشمن دارم همی
هیچ نخواهم کي شوم زو جُدا
ای عجبی هر گز دیدی کسی
کو شد بر دشمن خود مُبتلا

Old age is my enemy but
I never wish to be separated from it.
So strange! Have you ever seen him
who's addicted to his enemy?

Abū Nuwās writes:

لَهْفِي عَلَى فِتْيَةٍ نَادَمْتُهُمْ زَمَانًا
مِثْلَ الشَّيَاطِينِ فِي دَيْرِ الشَّيَاطِينِ

مَشَوْا إِلَى الرَّاحِ مَشَى الرَّخَّ^٦ وَأَنْصَرَفُوا
وَالرَّاحُ^٧ يَمْشِي بِهِمْ مَشَى الْفَرَازِينِ^٨

ترجمه ٩:

دریغ^{١٠} حُرَّانِ یاران من بیرنایی ۲۸۱ ب

کی بود مجلسهای^{١١} ز فرّ ما زیبا^{١٢}

جو رفتنِ رُخِ رفتار ما بمجلس لهُو

و باز گشتنِ رفتنِ جُو رفتِ فرزینا

Where have gone those friends of mine in my youth?
When were those feasts adorned with our splendour?
On our way to joyful parties, we walked like rooks;
On our way back, we returned like queens.

A poet writes:

فَإِنْ تَكُ قَدْ عَزَلْتَ فَلَيْسَ نُكْرًا
فَإِنَّ الْعَزَلَ غَايَةٌ^٢ كُلِّ وَالِ

فَلَا يَحْزُنُكَ صَرْفُكَ عَنْ قَضَاءِ^٦
فَإِنَّكَ مَا عَزَلْتَ عَنْ^٣ الْمَعَالِي

ترجمه ١:

عجب نی گر ترا معزولی^٤ آمد نباشد این سخن مُنکر بمعقول^٩
اگر معزول گشتی از ولایت نهی^٥ از رادمردی^٦ هیچ معزول

It's no surprise you're doomed to deposition.
 The wise find no faults to this.
 You're deposed from rulership,
 but never from your honour.

Following these Arabic citations and translations, Rādūyānī goes on to add another chapter on translation. First, “On translating traditions [*al-akhbār*], and anecdotes [*al-amthāl*], and aphorisms [*al-ḥikam*]”: “One of *balāgha* devices is when a poet writes a *bayt* that means the same as a tradition from the Prophet—May peace be upon him—or the same as a well-known anecdote or word of wisdom.” He gives the example of three Persian verses (*bayt*) by Mukhalladī Gurgānī, translating a Prophetic tradition:

قول پیغامبر - صلی الله علیه و سلم - مَنْ أَصْبَحَ [مِنْكُمْ] ^۴ آمِنًا فِي سِرِّهِ
 ۳ مُعَافًا فِي بَدَنِهِ ^۵ وَ لَهُ قُوَّةٌ | يَوْمَهُ فَكَأَنَّمَا حِيزَتْ لَهُ الدُّنْيَا ۲۸۲
 بِحَذَا فِيرَهَا ^۶.
 ترجمه ^۷:
 ۶ هر کرا بهره کرد ایزد فرد دانش و امن و تن دُرستی و خورد
 زین جهان بهره یی ^۸ تمامی یافت گو بگردد دگر فُصول مگر
 کارزو را کرانه نیست بدید آزا خاک سیر داند کرد

He who is blessed by God the One
 with knowledge, safety, health, and decency,
 enjoys his share of this world entirely,
 does not need to yearn for vanities anymore.
 Human wishes reach no shores.
 Dust knows how to satisfy greed.

Whereas the previous translation device consists of translating Arabic verse into Persian verse, this category includes examples in which Arabic prose is translated into Persian verse. Rādūyānī further elaborates on translational categories of *balāgha* by adding a chapter on “approximating the proverbs to verse [*taqrīb al-amthāl bi al-abyāt*].” He defines the

device as follows: “One of *balāgha* popular devices is when one knows the approximations between Persian legends [*afsān-hā-yi ‘ajam*] and the Quranic verses [*āyāt-i Qur’ān*] in proper occasions, as is said “You will see whatever you do.” This legend approximates what the Glorious God says:

چُنان کی گویند: هرج کنی
 ۱۲ خود|بینی^{۱۰}. این افسانه نزدیکست بقول خدای عزّ و جل: فَمَنْ ۸۳
 يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ، وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ^{۱۱}.

As can be seen from the examples, this category includes translation from Arabic prose—all Qur’anic verses— into Persian prose. Rādūyānī dedicates a separate chapter, “*fi ma’nī al-āyāt bi al-abyāt*,” to rendering of the Quranic verses into Persian verse. “One of the devices,” he writes, “is when a poet writes a verse the meaning of which is close to what God the Glorious says; as it is recorded in the Incorruptible Book [the Quran],

قوله تعالى: مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ^۵. روزکی گوید:^۶
 ۹ چُنان کی خاک سرشتی بزیر خاک شوی^۷
 بنات^۸ خاک و تو اندر میان خاک آگین^۹

and Rūdakī writes (in *mujtath*):

You’re moulded dust, you will be taken under the dust—
 the brides of dust⁴ and you covered all in dust.

Tarjama after Rādūyānī

⁴ “The girls of the earth [*banāt-i khāk*]” can be a metaphor for plant seeds.

No other Persian rhetorician has surpassed the pioneering Rādūyānī in the meticulous classification of the different types of poetry translation. Waṭwāṭ (d. 1182), who was familiar with Rādūyānī's work, although he did not openly cite him, characterizes *al-tarjama* as "when the poet versifies an Arabic *bayt* into Persian, or vice versa."⁵ Waṭwāṭ's translations from Nāṣir Khusrow and Qāzī Yaḥyā b. Šā'id display a dual commitment to both form and content. The translations are also indicative of Waṭwāṭ's bilingual talents in translation from Arabic into Persian and vice versa:

<p>بر فعل بذ وليك ملامت نداشت سود خرم دلا کی دانشش اندر میان نبود</p> <p>وَلَكِنْ زَمَانِي لَيْسَ يَرُدُّهُ الْعَدْلُ فَطُوبَى لِيَصْدِرَ لَيْسَ فِي ضَمْنِهِ فَضْلُ</p>	<p>کردم بسی ملامت مردهر خویش را دارد زمانه تنک دل من ز دانشش</p> <p>و ترجمه این مراست بتازی: عَدَلْتُ زَمَانِي مُدَّةً فِي فِعَالِهِ يُضَيِّقُ صَدْرِي الدَّهْرُ بُغْضًا لِفَضْلِهِ</p>
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Nāṣir Khusrow writes:

And its translation into Persian is mine:

I have reproached my times so bitterly
for its evil deeds but in vain.
The times saddens my knowing heart.
Happy is the heart that knows nothing.

Qāzī Yaḥyā b. Šā'id writes the Arabic poem:

<p>وَقَدْ سَامُوهُ حَمَلًا لَا يُطِيقُ كَمَا أَنَّ الْأُمُورَ لَهَا مَضِيقُ وَإِمَّا يَنْتَهِي هَذَا الطَّرِيقُ</p> <p>گفت و می کند بسختی جانی کی مرا نیست جزین درمائی یا بود راه مرا بایانی</p>	<p>أَقُولُ كَمَا يَقُولُ حِمَارٌ سُوءٌ سَاصْبِرُ وَالْأُمُورُ لَهَا إِسَاعُ فَإِمَّا أَنْ أَمُوتَ أَوْ الْمَكَارِي</p> <p>و ترجمه این مراست بیارسی: من همان گویم کان لاشه خرك جه كنم بار كنم راه برم یا بمیرم من یا خر بنده</p>
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⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwāṭ, *Ḥadā'iq al-sihr fi daqā'iq al-shi'r*, ed. 'Abbas Eqbal (Tehran: 1929-1930), 69.

And its translation into Persian is mine:

I say what that little decrepit ass
said in its mortal agony:
I don't know what to do: to carry? to walk?
There's no remedy for my pain except
I die, or the ass master dies,
or the road dies.

Shams Qays Rāzī (active 1204-1230) did not include *tarjama* as a figurative device, or as he calls them, as “the delicacies of poetry and some of the beautifying devices used in prose and poetry,” in his seminal treatise on the prosody and poetics art of the Persians, *al-Muʿjam*. However, the tradition of counting translation as a figurative device was more or less continued in some of the following treatises of Persian poetics such as *Daqāʿiq al-shiʿr* by Tāj al-Ḥalāvī (active 15th century), *Badāyiʿ al-afkār fī ṣanāyiʿ al-ashʿār* by Mīrzā Ḥusayn Vāʾiẓ Kāshifī Sabzavārī (d. 1504), and Shams al-ʿUlamā Garakānī’s *Abdaʿ al-badāyiʿ*. This is while Sharaf al-dīn Rāmī is silent about *tarjama* in his important manual of poetic devices, *Ḥadāʿiq al-ḥaqāʿiq*.

With *Daqāʿiq al-shiʿr* by ʿAlī b. Muḥammad, known as Tāj al-Ḥalāvī, the trope *tarjama* is not restricted to Arabic-into-Persian translations anymore. He defines the device as “when a poet translates a *bayt* from Arabic into Persian, or Mongolian, or Turkish, or Pahlavi, and vice versa.”⁶ However, the example he gives is still a translation from Arabic into

⁶ ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Tāj al-Ḥalāvī, *Daqāʿiq al-shiʿr*, ed. Sayyed Mohammad Kazem Emam (Tehran: University of Tehran, 1929-1930), 94.

Persian:

عریبه :
ان الذی هو کالقرطاس والقلم
اخو لسانین ذو وجهین فی الکلم
سود محتیا کالقرطاس مستطما
واضرب مقلده بالسيف کالقلم
ترجمه :
هر که چون کاغذ و قلم باشد
دو زبان و دورو بگاہ سخن
همچو کاغذ سیاه کن رویش
چون قلم گردنش بتیغ بزن

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دو زبان و دورو بگاہ سخن
همچو کاغذ سیاه کن رویش
چون قلم گردنش بتیغ بزن

He who, like the paper and the pen,
has two tongues and two faces:
Blacken his face—as if a paper;
cut his neck—as if a pen.

Kāshifī Sabzavārī adds little to Tāj al-Ḥalāvī's definition and single example. In his definition, "*Tarjama* literally means to clarify (*rowshan gardāndan*) one language by another. As a technical term (*dar iṣṭilāḥ*), it is when a poet versifies the meaning of an Arabic *bayt* into Persian, Turkish, or another language, and vice versa."⁷

⁷ Mīrzā Ḥusayn Vā'iz Kāshifī Sabzavārī, *Badāyi' al-afkār fi ṣanāyi' al-ash'ār*, ed. Mir Jalal al-Din Kazzazi (Tehran: Markaz, 1990), 141.

In *Abda' al-badāyi'*, the last authoritative work in Persian science of tropes (*badī'*) according to modernist poet, Mahdī Akhavan Sales, Shams al-'Ulamā Garakānī (d. 1927) gives more varied examples for *tarjama*, which he defines as an instance in which “ the meaning of a phrase is translated from a language into another.” “In verse,” he adds, “it is considered one of the devices. It means that translation should be in verse whether the original is in verse or in prose. The greater the accordance between the translation and the original the better. Unless translation better expresses the meaning than the original.”⁸ His examples include a well-known *bayt* from Ḥāfiẓ translating the Arabic poet Abū al-'Alā al-Ma'arī (d. 1058), which has become a Persian proverb:

مثال؛ معرّی گوید:

أَرَى الْعَنْقَاءَ تَكْبُرُ أَنْ تُصَادَا فَعَايِدُ مَنْ تُطِيقُ لَهُ عِنَادَا^{۳۳۳}

حافظ:

که عنقا را بلند است آشیانه برو این دام بر مرغ دگر نه

Go set this trap for another bird,
for 'Anqā (phoenix) nests in heights.

as well as a *bayt* from Qays b. al-Muwallaḥ (d. 688), known as Majnūn, in Jalāl al-Din Muḥammad Balkhī (d. 1273), which Garakānī believes has turned out “more eloquent [*ablagh*]” than the original.⁹

قیس مجنون:

أَنَا مَنْ أَهْوَى وَمَنْ أَهْوَى أَنَا نَحْنُ رُوحَانٍ حَلَلْنَا بَدْنَا

جلال الدین محمد بلخی:

من کیم لیلی و لیلی کیست من ما یکی روحیم اندر دو بدن

Who am I? Layli; but who's Layli? I
One soul in two bodies we are.

⁸ Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-'Ulamā Garakānī, *Abda' al-badāyi'*, ed. Hosayn Ja'fari (Tabriz: Ahrar, 1993), 119.

⁹ Garakānī, *Abda' al-badāyi'*, 119.

Garakānī gives another example from Khāqānī Shirvānī's translation of Yazīd b.

Mu'āwiyya:

یزید بن معاویه:

شُمَيْسَةُ كَرَمٍ بُرْجُهَا قَعْرُ دَنْهَا وَ مَشْرِقُهَا السَّاقِي وَ مَغْرِبُهَا فَمِي^{۳۳۴}

خاقانی:

می، آفتاب زرفشان جام بلورش، آسمان

مشرق، کف ساقیش دان مغرب، لب یار آمده

Behold wine—the gold-pouring sun, in the crystal cup-sky,
rising from the saqi's hand, setting on my beloved's lips.

And another example from Ibn Hindū (unidentified by Garakānī), in Waṭwāt's translation, which he interestingly back-translates into Arabic verses:

دیگری گوید:

أَنْصَفَ فِي الْحُكْمِ بَيْنَ شَكْلَيْنِ
وَ هُوَ إِذَا جَادَ دَامِعُ الْعَيْنِ

که نکو ناید از خردمندی
توهمی بخشی و همی خندی

وَ السَّحْبُ عِنْدَ الْجُودِ تَبْكِي
فَيُضُّ يَدَيْكَ تَحْكِي^{۳۳۵}

مَنْ قَاسَ جَدْوَاكَ بِالْغَمَامِ فَمَا
أَنْتَ إِذَا جُدْتَ ضَاحِكٌ أَبَدًا

من نگویم به ابرمانندی
او همی بخشد و همی گرید

لَوْ لَأَبْتَسَامُكَ فِي السَّحَابِ
كِدْنَا نُحَيِّلُ أَنْ نَقُولَ السَّحْبُ

رشیدالدین وطواط:

و در همین معنی من گفته‌ام:

I won't say you resemble a cloud—
It does not make sense.
The cloud bestows gifts and cries
you bestow gifts and laugh.

In his modern textbook on Persian rhetorical embellishments, *Zīb-i Sukhan* (1968), Iranian scholar Maḥmūd Nashāṭ, adds a condition: “it is maintained that *tarjama* is an inventive device (*badī'*) related to expression (*lafz*) when it is in Persian verse no matter the

original was in prose or in verse.” He then sets forth the criteria for evaluating translations based on the comparison with the original: “If it is better in transferring *lafz* and *ma’ nā* than the original, it is an “excellent [*’ālī*]” translation, if its equal, “acceptable [*maqbul*],” if inferior, it is called “*mardhūl* [inferior].”” The implication is that translation should surpass the original. “Plain translation has nothing to do with inventive [*badī’*] virtues.”¹⁰

With the advent of modernism, poetry translation turned from a marginal trope into an integral practice of modernist Iranian poetry that had a decisive impact on the formation of free verse in Persian literature. This expansion also regards the shift to neoclassical and romantic European poems as sources for translation. However, before dealing with this tremendous upheaval in the production and reception of poems in Persian, we need a little more reflection on the implications of considering poetry translation as a trope for classical Persian poetics. In other words, it is necessary to understand what made the classical rhetorician classify *tarjama* as figurative device along with other devices such as metaphor (*isti’āra*), simile (*tashbīh*), and paronomasia (*jinās*). Classical treatises of Persian rhetoric, which typically consist of exhaustive lists and glossaries of figurative devices, are usually impoverished in theoretical terms and silent concerning the criteria upon which figurative language is made through poetic discourse. They say little about how translation contributes to figurality of language in poetry.

In his preface, Rādūyānī declares his purpose in composing *Tarjuman al-balāgha* as filling the gap in Persian of a book on “types of eloquent speech [*ajnās-i balāghat*] and kinds of devices [*aqsām-i sanā’at*], and the recognition of ornamented discourse with dignified meanings [*ma’ānī-yi bā-pīrāya va buland-pāya*]” (2). The word he uses for “device,” *sanā’at*, originally means “craftsmanship” and “fabrication” in Arabic—very close to the meaning of the Greek word *poiesis* in the sense of “to make.” Rādūyānī admits that his book is founded

¹⁰ Mahmud Nashat, *Zīb-i Sukhan* (Tehran: Sherkat-e sahāmi-ye chap va entesharat-e Iran, 1967), 181-185.

upon translation from Arabic sources and that he has selected “the better-known inventions [*badāyi*] that are closer to normal tastes [*’urf-i ṭabāyi*] such as inlaying [*tarṣī*], paranomasia [*tajnīs*], division [*taqsīm*], metaphor [*isti’ārat*], derivation [*ishtiḳāq*], exaggeration [*ighrāq*], and the like” (3) and that he has organized his chapters according to the chapters in Marghīnānī’s *Maḥāsīn al-kalām* (3).¹¹

Similarly, Waṭwāt’s brief preface to his treatise helps no more in defining what he considers to be “types of pure language and style of eloquent speech [*aqsām-i faṣāḥat va asālīb-i balāghat*]” (1). Shams-i Qays seems to have no other idea of tropes he has collected in the sixth chapter of *al-Mu’jam* than “beauties of poetry [*maḥāsīn-i shi’r*]” and “beautifying devices [*ṣanā’āt-i mustahsin*],” which he uses in the chapter title (321). Nor does he mention *tarjama* in the final chapter of his book (*khātima-yi kitāb*) where he elaborates on a typology of plagiarisms in poetry.

Ḳvāja Naṣīr-al-Dīn Ṭusī’s logical approach to the poetic discourse in *Asās al-iqtibās* is also of little help.¹² First, because Ṭusī does not mention *tarjama* at all in the typology he offers of figures of speech based on similarity (*shibāhat*) or dissimilarity (*mukhālafat*), in expression (*lafẓ*) or in meaning (*ma’nā*), entirely (*tāmm*) or partially (*nāqiṣ*). Second, his understanding of poetry, as a logician, contradicts that of Rādūyānī, Waṭwāt, and others who have a metricist (*’arūzī*) approach to poetry. In the ninth essay of his *Foundations of Learning* (*Asās al-iqtibās*) (1244-1245),¹³ which is dedicated to poetics (*biṭūrīqā* [*sic*]), Ṭusī distinguishes between poetry in the traditional logician’s view, as “imaginative speech [*kalām-i mukhayyal*],” on the one hand, and poetry in the view of his contemporaries, as “rhythmic and rhymed speech [*kalām-i mawzūn-i muqaffā*].” Ṭusī agrees with the synthesis of

¹¹ See Geert Jan van Gelder, *Two Arabic Treatises on Stylistics: al-Marghīnānī’s al-Maḥāsīn fī ’l-naẓm wa-’l-nāthir, and Ibn Aflah’s Muqaddima, formerly ascribed to al-Marghīhānī* (İstanbul: Nederlands Historische-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1987).

¹² See Justine Landau, *De rythme & de raison - lecture croisée de deux traités de poésie persans du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Sorbonne, 2014).

¹³ Ḳvāja Naṣīr-al-Dīn Ṭusī, *Kitāb-i Asās al-iqtibās*, ed. Modarres Razavi (Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 1977), 586.’

the two views as “poetry is imaginative speech consisting of rhythmic, equal (*mutasāvī*), and rhymed phrases.” Poetry translation has no place in Ṭusī’s typology of figures of speech, which he introduces as “devices used for creating the imaginary [*ḥīlat-hā-yī ki az jahat-i takhyīl ba kār dārand*],” because translation of a poem from Arabic into Persian as such does not fulfil a mimetic (*muhākāt*) role in a poem. Poetry translation is mimetic only to the extent that it consists of the imitation of the original poem in expression (*lafz*) or in meaning (*ma’nā*), which does not necessarily induce imagination.

It is in this context that the aforementioned Maḥmūd Nashāt’s stipulation of *tarjama* gains significance: poetry translation is considered a figure of speech only if the end result is considered a poem in Persian. In that sense, it is no different from composing poetry in a new language. By categorizing *tarjama* as a figure of *lafz*, rather than of *ma’nā*—that is, a type of figuration that takes place on the visible or audible level of words, or shape and order of letters, rather than artful deviations from the signification of words—Nashāt’s view resonates with Rādūyānī, who defines poetry translation as a figure of speech in which a supposedly fixed meaning is transferred through shifting expressions across languages. However, this is only partially true as *tarjama* can also be considered a figure of *ma’nā* when we take into account the referential intertextuality created through a poet’s incorporation of another poet’s *bayt*, though in a translated form, in their poem—a kind of *taẓmīn* as the practice of quoting other poets’ verses is called in Islamic poetics.

As mentioned earlier in this essay, with the advent of modernism, poetry translation, especially from languages other than Arabic, came into wider use. As far as creating a poem in a second language is concerned, classical Persian poetics offered more objective criteria for determining what can be considered a poem. From the earliest contacts with European poetry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, considerably mediated through Turkish translations, it was difficult for translators to find common formal grounds between European

original literatures and the premodern Persian literary repertoire. Classical Persian poetry was composed in regular *'arūzī* rhythmic patterns, using a quantitative metric system based on short and long syllables. The musicality of this metric system could not be assimilated to, for example, the French syllabic poetry or to the English metric system, which is based on patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables. Nineteenth-century Iranian translational confrontations with European poetry produced texts that were labeled poems but which lacked the musicality of classical Persian. They therefore sounded unpoetic to Iranian readers. However faithfully translated, the translated lines did not usually convey the rhythm or feeling of the original; French and English poems sounded prosaic in Persian translation. Although the poetic lines of European poetry in translation were too irregular to be perceived as poetry in classical terms, translation helped legitimate modernist experiments with the poetic line's shape, length, and syllabic quantity by the next generation of Iranian poets. While the radical change of shape in the poetic line was not caused by translation alone, translated words created estrangement in readers/listeners who were accustomed to reading poetry exclusively in regulated metrics.

In order to fill the gap between the prosaic translated text and the Iranian reader's expectations for poetry, the earliest translational encounters domesticated and adapted European poems into familiar *'arūzī* metrics and classical Persian poetic forms. In these early verse translations, translators preferred to remain faithful to received forms in the target language rather than to literal words in the original. The translation in 1923 of Victor Hugo's "Sur une barricade" (On the barricade, 1871) by the Iranian-born poet Abolqasem Lahuti (who later settled in the Soviet Union) is among the first examples of a Persian translation that uses the method of verse translation (*tarjuma-ye manzūm*).¹⁴ Three years later, the poet-satirist Iraj Mirza published "Zohreh va Manuchehr" (Zohreh and Manuchehr, 1926), a work

¹⁴ Abolqasem Lahuti, *Sangar-i khūnīn* (Moscow, 1923).

loosely based on Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593). This was an adaptation of Shakespeare's poem to the predominant verse narrative form of classical Persian—known as *matnavī*—that most closely matched that of the original. Iraj Mirza also composed a work based on Friedrich Schiller's *Der Taucher* (The Diver, 1797) called “Shāh va jām” (The King and the Cup, 1918), and a translation of Jean de la Fontaine's seventeenth-century reworking of the fable “Le Corbeau et le Renard” (The Crow and the Fox).¹⁵

None of these translations aimed to reproduce the original in literal terms; they were concerned with fitting the original poem within a recognizably classical poetic line pattern. During the 1920s and 1930s, several Iranian literary magazines developed the practice of paraphrasing European—mainly French—poems in Persian prose and commissioning poets to reconfigure these paraphrases into classical Persian poetry. This form of appropriation, known as *iqtirāh* (test of literary talent) facilitated the transition from canonical premodern forms to the free verse of Iranian modernism under the influence of European models.¹⁶

Poetry translation in modern times, and its distinguished status in modernist Iranian literature, and the emergence of outstanding modernist poet-translators such as Ahmad Shamlu, Bijan Elahi, and Mohammad Mokhtari, requires separate discussion.¹⁷ Translation has been at the centre of debates between modernists and traditionalists, and has always had its opponents among not only traditionalists but also modernists themselves. It is not only these days and from the most antimodernist tribunes of Islamist cultural policy makers in Iran that “translation-struck-ness [*tarjuma-zadigī*]” is equated with the more classical “West-

¹⁵ Iraj Mirza, *Dīvān*, ed. Mohammad Ja'far Mahjub (Tehran: Andisheh, 1977), 128-132 and 153.

¹⁶ See Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, “From Translation to Appropriation: Poetic Cross-Breeding in Early Twentieth Century Iran,” *Comparative Literature* 47.1 (1995): 53-78.

¹⁷ I have done this through a number of co-authored research articles on the significance of poetry translation for modernist Persian literature. See Kayvan Tahmasebian and Rebecca Ruth Gould, “Translation as Alienation: Sufi Hermeneutics and Literary Modernism in Bijan Elahi's Translations,” *Modernism/modernity*, volume 5, cycle 4, Print Plus; “The Temporality of Interlinear Translation: *Kairos* in the Persian Hölderlin,” *Representations* 155: 1-21; “The Translational Horizons of Iranian Modernism: Ahmad Shamlu's Global Southern Literary Canon,” *Twentieth Century Literature* 68 (1): 25-52.

struck-ness [*gharb-zadigī*].” Coined by Iranian philosophy teacher Ahmad Fardid, and popularized by Iranian writer, Jalal Al-e Ahmad, who used it in the title of his 1962 book, the term *gharb-zadigī* refers to Iranians’ loss of identity as a consequence of absolute submission to European values and lifestyle. The danger of superficial, inadequate, and erratic translations in undermining any cultural renovation is debated among contemporary modernists, and the importance of direct contact to the original sources of European culture is strongly advised.

Whatever we think of translation, the flourishing of modernist Persian poetry in diverse new forms and experimentations cannot be imagined without poetry translation. By translating world poetry, modernist Iranian poets shaped their own poetic voices. A major part of modernist poetry in Persian is generated by abandoning the traditional Persian poetic sensibility which relied heavily on figurative embellishments. While classical poets could boast of their powers in adding layers after intricate layers of rhetorical embellishments in their poems, the modernist poet practiced self-estrangement through de-rhetoricization that was a necessary step toward horizons of modern freedom.

Suggested readings:

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Keywords:

tarjama – poetry translation – trope – figurative language – *balāgha*