The 1st Perso-Indica Conference

TRANSLATING AND WRITING INDIC LEARNING IN PERSIAN TRADUCTION ET ECRITURE DES SAVOIRS INDIENS EN PERSAN

30-31 mai 2012 Paris Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3









Program



and Abstracts

Program



Mercredi 30 mai 2012, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3 salle Claude Simon, 4 rue des Irlandais 75005 Paris

- 09h30 : Welcome address by Pollet Samvelian, Director of the research unit 'Mondes iranien et indien'
- 09h40 : Introduction to the conference by Fabrizio Speziale: the Perso-Indica project

Session 1, Chairman : Maria Szuppe

- 10h00 : Françoise 'Nalini' Delvoye, «Indo-Persian Texts on Music in the Sultanate Period (13th-15th Century)»
- 10h30 Discussion
- 10h45 Coffee Break
- 11h15 : Anna Martin, «A Study on the Translation Methods Used in the Indo-Persian Translation Literature of the Mughal Period (16th-18th century)»
- 11h45 Discussion
- 12h00 Lunch

Session 2, Chairman : Carl Ernst

- 14h00 : Audrey Truschke, «Contested Translation in Akbar's Persian Ramayana»
- 14h30 Discussion
- 14h45 : Prashant Keshavmurthy, «Reading Puranic Time: Mirza Bedil and his Brahman Interlocutor »
- 15h15 Discussion
- 15h30 Coffee Break

Session 3, Chairman : Nalini Balbir

- 16h00 : Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, «From Persian to Sanskrit Texts, Translations/Adaptations and Patrons/Authors»
- 16h30 Discussion

- 16h45 : Christopher Minkowski, «JyotiSa Authors at the Mughal Court: Muhūrta and Tājika»
- 17h15 Discussion
- 17h30 General Discussion

Jeudi 31 mai 2012, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3, salle Bourjac, 17 rue de la Sorbonne 75005 Paris

Session 4, Chairman : Christopher Minkowski

- 09h30 : Susanne Kurz, «Role and relationship of Graeco-Islamic and Indian elements in Persian adaptations of the Koka Shastra»
- 10h00 Discussion
- 10h15 : Carl W. Ernst. «Indian Lovers in Arabic and Persian Guise: Azad Bilgrami's Depiction of nayikas»
- 10h45 Discussion
- 11h00 Coffee Break
- 11h30 : Eloïse Brac de la Perrière, « Persian paintings on Indian learned traditions »
- 12h00 Discussion
- 12h15 Lunch

Session 5, Chairman : Eva Orthmann

- 14h15 : Supriya Gandhi, «Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in the Mazhab of the Hindus" : Situating Persian Translations of Dharmaśāstra texts»
- 14h45 Discussion
- 15h00 : Thibaut d'Hubert Jacques Leider, «Early Orientalism and Arakanese archives: The Persian Buddhist texts of the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin»
- 15h30 Discussion
- 15h45 Coffee Break
- 16h15 : Claire Gallien, «Rewriting the History of India Before the 'Oriental Renaissance': From Classical to Persian Sources»
- 16h45 Discussion
- 17h00 General discussion

Abstracts

Françoise 'Nalini' Delvoye, EPHE - UMR 'Mondes iranien et indien', Paris

 \ll Indo-Persian Texts on Music in the Sultanate Period (13th-15th Century)»



Before I focus on particular texts on music produced in the Sultanate period (13th-15th centuries), I shall briefly survey the scholarly work published on Indo-Persian sources documenting performing arts in South Asia. They belong to a wide range of literary genres and have been studied with

different approaches by musicologists, socio-political and cultural historians, a fact that is worthy of notice. The historical context and the patronage of texts on music and dance written in Persian in India need to be considered prior to assessing their specificity compared to earlier and contemporary Sanskrit texts that inspired some of them. The availability of later copies of manuscripts is also a strong indicator of the life of those texts that might have been innovative when they were commissioned, but seemed to have been forgotten, as most of them are not referred to in later works. As a case study representative of Indo-Persian texts on performing arts, and court music in particular, in the Sultanate period, I shall highlight the striking features of two treatises including translations of major Sanskrit works. The Ghunyat al-Munya (1374-75) was written in Gujarat by an anonymous author, and the Lahjāt-i Sikandar Shāhī by one Hammad, better known as Yahyā al-Kābulī, at the court of Sultan Sikandar Lodī (r. 1489-1517). Both are worthy of being introduced in the light of earlier writings on a selection of key concepts by Sanskrit musicologists and the court poet and musician Amīr Khusrau Dehlavī (1253-1325). All explicitly indicate their authors' thorough knowledge of Indian music theory and aesthetics, as well as practice, and a personal experience of artistic performance, with a realistic awareness of the prevailing etiquette and the criteria of appreciation by a connoisseur audience. Their obvious pedagogical intent indicates how court scholars tried to fulfil the wish of their aristocratic patrons to make them 'translate' Sanskrit classics for learned readers brought up in a Persianate milieu alien to 'Indic' culture. They also represent an enthralling 'ethnomusicological' avant-garde, forerunner of a rich tradition of Indo-Persian writings on performing arts in South Asia, that has lately attracted scholars' curiosity.

Anna Martin, Philipps-Universität, Marburg

«A Study on the Translation Methods Used in the Indo-Persian Translation Literature of the Mughal Period (16th-18th century)»



The emerging encounters between Indian Pandits and Persian intellectuals at the Mughal court and their joint endeavours which are reflected in Indo-Persian translation literature are still an understudied field. In the Mughal period a large number of texts from various genres were

translated from Sanskrit into Persian, which was the language of literature and government. In the course of their joint translation work, the Indian intermediaries as well as the Muslim translators were confronted with various linguistic and cultural challenges. To date, however, there exist no in-depth examination that, by way of close textual analysis of corresponding Sanskrit sources and their Persian translation, reflect what difficulties communicating exactly entailed and what methods were precisely used by those who worked on the Indian sources. The goal of my project is to examine these challenges. To do so, manuscripts and text editions of both Sanskrit and Persian primary sources are taken into account. One question I will focus on is whether the process of translating Sanskrit classics into Persian during the Mughal period was somehow systematised. Historiographic works like the Muntahab at-Tawārīh of Badā'ūnī as well as introductions (muqaddima) or supplements (*hātima*) in manuscripts of translated texts from that period provide insight into the nature and scope of the translation process (e. g. Abū al-Fadl's introduction to the Razmnāmah translation of the Mahābhārata). Another important question is how to specify the intended audience of the translated works. Some scholars assumed that there was a large number of 'Hindus' who also used to read their religious books in Persian as the knowledge of Sanskrit used to be a privilege accorded only to a small number of individuals (cf. Mujtabai, 1978). The object of my study will be exclusively literary texts from various genres, such as narrative literature, epics and drama, which are very extensive in any case. I do not intend to take Persian translations of texts on astronomy and science or translations of legal texts in the context of the colonial judiciary into consideration. Independent Persian versions that are several times removed from the Sanskrit original by way of several translation versions have also to be excluded. Nor will adaptations that only roughly derive from an Indian source but are not regarded as translations in the narrower sense be considered for this work. Conclusions regarding the translation method and technique will be drawn with the aid of the results derived from the text examples. The intention is to examine linguistic aspects (grammar, syntax) as well as the content-related level. The objective of the project is to make a fundamental contribution towards

illuminating the translation methods of Indo-Persian literature, which is comparable with Greco-Arabic or Indo-Tibetan translation literature as far as scope and significance are concerned. This may lead to the emergence of new and productive perspectives for the studies on translation literature with a focus on cultural history as well as literature.

Audrey Truschke, University of Cambridge, Cambridge

«CONTESTED TRANSLATION IN AKBAR'S PERSIAN RAMAYANA»



In the late sixteenth century, the Mughal Emperor Akbar sponsored the first full translation of the Sanskrit Ramavana into Persian. The newly minted Persian Ramayan proved to be quite popular and was reproduced in multiple sixteenth and seventeenth century manuscript copies. However, the text was not fully stable, and writers subtly shifted the

language and texture of the narrative in accordance with the perceived interests and expectations of their patrons. In this paper, I compare two of our three earliest manuscripts of Akbar's Persian Ramayan, the Freer Ramayan (c. 1605) and the Hamida Banu Begum Ramayan (c. 1594), in order to uncover the nature and import of these changes. The two copies were produced, respectively, for 'Abdur Rahim Khan-i Khanan, an important Mughal noble, and Akbar's mother. My comparative reading suggests that the Indo-Persian tradition had a dynamic and fluid understanding of the literary, religious, and political implications of Akbar's Ramayan.

Prashant Keshavmurthy, McGill University, Montréal - Freie Universität, Berlin

«READING PURANIC TIME: MIRZA BEDIL AND HIS BRAHMAN INTERLOCUTOR»



Mirza 'Abd al-Qadir Khan Bedil (d. 1720) devoted the first "Element" of his autobiographical work Chahar 'unsur (Four Elements, completed in 1704) to accounts of his meetings with various teachers. Set into these accounts is an account of his conversation, on the road to the Sufi

shrine of Baba Hasan Abdāl, with a Brahmin companion. This Brahmin queries Bedil on the meaning of a prophetic Tradition (hadith) relating that the Day of Judgement occurs at each blink's opening, citing the vast tracts of time enumerated in the Puranas by contrast and stating his incomprehension at the prophetic Tradition. Bedil silences the Brahmin by interpreting the Brahma and Vishnu of the Puranas as the "Universal Intellect" and the

"Necessary Existent", respectively, and inferring that the time it takes the Universal Intellect to actualize a potential being with the aid of the Necessary Existent is no more than a blink. I argue that Bedil's interpretation of Puranic time in terms of Muslim Peripatetic philosophy, set as it is before and after pedagogical encounters with Muslim teachers, displays the hermeneutical powers he owes these teachers, powers with which to reduce an apparently foreign, Indic cosmogony to its underlying and already formulated Islamic logic. As such, it adumbrates Bedil's conception of the Model Reader.

Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, Düsseldorf

«FROM PERSIAN TO SANSKRIT TEXTS, TRANSLATIONS/ADAPTATIONS AND PATRONS/AUTHORS»



Along with the production of a large corpus of Persian writings on diverse subjects, which is generally known as Indo-Persian literature, several writings were produced also in Sanskrit, either as direct translations from the Persian or as adaptations thereof. The number of such Sanskrit works

is not as large as that of the Indo-Persian texts, but is significant nevertheless. The proposed paper will explore the nature and extent of these of Sanskrit writings, attempt to identify the locations where such writings were produced and discuss the persons who were connected with their production either as authors or patrons. It will be shown that the majority of these works are what the Germans call "Sachbücher" and rarely include belles letters. An interesting group is formed by manuals in Sanskrit to learn Persian language: in the period between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries more than a dozen manuals were composed. Other areas covered by these works are astronomy, astronomical tables, astronomical instruments, astrology and materia medica. The patrons who sponsored such exchanges were the Sultans of Delhi, most prominent of them being Firuz Shah Tughluq, Mughal emperors like Akbar and his descendants, and Sawai Jai Singh and his son Madho Singh. Not all the texts were due to royal patronage at Delhi, Agra, Jaipur and probably also Golconda; several texts were produced on individual initiative in Gujarat and at Varanasi. An interesting feature of this exchange is that the Jains were in the forefront as mediators between the Islamic and Sanskrit traditions of learning. An important question that arises in this connection is about the bilingual scholars who were capable of translating directly from Persian into Sanskrit, and vice versa. While the authors who produced Sanskrit manuals to learn Persian were definitely bilingual, it will be shown that often translations were made through the medium of the local vernacular and not directly.

Christopher Minkowski, University of Oxford, Oxford

«JYOTIȘA AUTHORS AT THE MUGHAL COURT: MUHŪRTA AND TĀJIKA»



Most of the Mughal emperors from Humāyūn to Muhammad Shāh employed Jyotişas or Brahmin astrologers. Many had a Jotik Rāy or official practitioner of the Sanskritic version of astrology. There is evidence that some of these jyotisas traveled with the monarch

during military campaigns. In fact, many of the most prominent authors of Jyotişa texts during the Mughal period had connections to the Mughal court. A large number of these authors composed works of muhūrta, i.e. horary or catarchic astrology, and these muhūrta works circulated widely in the Sanskrit readership. The paper will explore the connection between Mughal patronage and trends in the jyotişa practice of muhūrta, comparing that connection with the one found in the equally successful Sanskrit Tājika literature.

Susanne Kurz, Ruhr-University, Bochum

«Role and relationship of Graeco-Islamic and Indian elements in Persian adaptations of the Koka Shastra»



Focussing on the aspect of traditions and fields of knowledge and their blending, this paper undertakes the tasks to trace a Sanskrit tradition and its passage into Persian treatises and to ascertain the extent of blending of traditions in these and related Persian works as well as the

working of this blending. In this context two questions arise: How are different and at least partly contradictory traditions brought together? And what is the field of knowledge like which is built up by such treatises? The paper first briefly introduces some manuscripts of Persian adaptations of the Sanskrit erotological work Koka Shastra titled *Lazzat un-nisā*², their special features and their relationship to each other. Afterwards, we turn to the degree of their dependence on the Koka Shastra as represented in its German translation by Klaus Mylius. In the course of this discussion, the scale and role of Graeco-Islamic medical knowledge in the *Lazzat un-nisā*² treatises and in other Persian erotological works produced in Muslim India will be considered. At the end we will come back to the aforementioned questions in the light of the findings presented in the paper.

Carl W. Ernst, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

«INDIAN LOVERS IN ARABIC AND PERSIAN GUISE: AZAD BILGRAMI'S DEPICTION OF *NAYIKAS*»



It is well known that Indian literature is full of encyclopedic classifications of many kinds, including the systematic description of different kinds of lovers, known as *nayika-bheda*. In the fourth and final section of the strikingly original Arabic treatise entitled *The*

Coral Rosary of Indian Traditions (Subhat al-marjan fi athar Hindustan, written in 1763-4), Ghulam 'Ali "Azad" Bilgrami (d. 1786) gave a detailed account of the categories of lovers found in Indian literature, all illustrated by Arabic verses, including both classical poems and verses of the author's own composition. Bilgrami subsequently translated this text into Persian, under the title Gazelles of India (Ghizlan al-Hind), substituting examples of Persian poetry to complete this comparative study of Arabic, Persian, and Indic rhetoric and poetics. Bilgrami was by no means the first Indian Muslim to be interested in these Indian descriptions of lovers. Abu al-Fazl provided an overview of the subject in his summary of Indian culture in the A'ini Akbari. Another significant landmark of this tradition was the wideranging 17th-century treatise on Indian culture called The Gift of India (Tuhfat al-Hind), by Mirza Khan ibn Fakhr al-Din Muhammad. This treatise contains an extensive discussion of lovers, using the Hindi term sringara-rasa as the main chapter heading. In this paper, I will analyze the structure and relationship of both phases of Bilgrami's project, outlining the overall structure of both the Arabic and Persian texts (and the latter is considerably abridged, being perhaps one third the size of the former), and then focusing on one or two particular examples of the types of lovers. A key problem for interpretation is the way in which Bilgrami invokes examples quite remote from South Asia (such as the Arab-Andalusian poets Ibn 'Abdi Rabbihi and Wallada of Cordoba) to explain the sensibility of Indian love theory, in such a highly allusive manner that only the most well-informed reader can grasp the comparison. Another point that emerges is the different sensibility of the Persian translation, which seems much more aimed at an audience familiar with Indian culture. In any case, this is a highly refined example of the translation of Indic culture into Persian and Arabic.

Eloïse Brac de La Perrière, Université Sorbonne Paris IV, Paris

« PERSIAN PAINTINGS ON INDIAN LEARNED TRADITIONS : PRELIMINARY REMARKS »



How can we transpose the issue of a research project such as Perso-Indica, deeply linked to the text, to the manuscript painting? As the latter is itself a text interpretation by the picture, in which way should it be studied in the context of this project? That is the question that will be used as a thread to this

introductory presentation. In the light of this problem which is essential for the art historian, I will present an initial review of research done in the subject. The dismantling of illustrated manuscripts and their dispersion across different collections, public and private, is making this work even more complicated. However, a preliminary corpus, still incomplete, will be established to try to perceive, if applicable, the primacy of certain texts chosen for illustration, at certain times. Which preliminary results for the explored manuscripts collections?

Supriya Gandhi, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

«COMMANDING RIGHT AND FORBIDDING WRONG IN THE MAZHAB OF THE HINDUS": SITUATING PERSIAN TRANSLATIONS OF DHARMAŚĀSTRA TEXTS»



This paper analyzes and contextualizes a seventeenthcentury Persian translation of a dharmaśāstra text entitled Ahkām-i avāmir va navāhī-yi madhab-i hunūd [Legal rulings on commanding (right) and forbidding (wrong) of the legal school (*madhab*) of the Hindus]. The work, completed in 1068 AH/1658 CE by a Kāyastha named Lāl Bihārī Bhojpurī, identifies itself as

a translation of the Yajñavalkya Smrti (Samirti Jāg Balak) together with the Mitāksara (Mitāchhar). The translator remarks in his introduction that, since the illustrious sage Yajñavalkya (Jāg Balak) had composed his work in such a way that intelligent people could not grasp it, Gosā'īn Vijñāneśvara (Bignānīsar) used his divinely granted intellect to convey the meaning of the text, as well as the essence of the other *smrtis*, comprising a précis of the words and deeds of most rsis, which is known as the Mitāksara. This work includes lavish praise of the reigning emperor, Aurangzeb Alāmgīr, and is dedicated to Ilāhvirdī Khān (d. 1659). My paper provides an overview of the main features of the translation, compared with the source texts. To situate this translation in a broader context of intellectual developments in South Asia, we must keep in mind that during the years 1667-75, Aurangzeb sponsored a mammoth codification and standardization of Hanafi jurisprudence, in a compendium known as the Fatāwā-yi Ālamgīrī. Reliant on a hundred and twenty four sources, this work exceeds previous such compilations in scale, providing a

textual legal resource for local jurists and the emperor alike. Lal Bihari Bhojpurī's translation reveals that during the mid-seventeenth century there was also an interest in the codification of *dharmaśāstra* as well as *fiqh*. In this regard, my paper examines work against the formation of a Persian reading public that consumed and also produced old and new genres of writings. As part of this process, Hindu writers in Persian such as Lal Bihari Bhojpuri attempted to systematize various forms of Indic learning for their own uses or at the request of patrons. The manuscript utilized for the purposes of this paper is located in the Maulana Azad Library of the Aligarh Muslim University. The Mitākṣara, in particular, later came to play a prominent role in British colonial efforts to codify Hindu law for use in the administration of justice. The orientalist Henry Thomas Colebrooke translated the work in 1810, so that it could be implemented in the colonial courts. He conceived of Hindu law as being divided into the Mitāksara and Dayābhāga branches, akin to the divisions between Sunni and Shia jurisprudence. The various prior engagements with dharmaśāstra in the Persian language are thus suggestive of a more complex and richly textured background to such colonial enterprises than modern scholarship has hitherto identified.

Thibaut d'Hubert, University of Chicago, Chicago - Jacques Leider, EFEO, Yangon

«EARLY ORIENTALISM AND ARAKANESE ARCHIVES: THE PERSIAN BUDDHIST TEXTS OF THE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, BERLIN»



This paper raises textual and contextual questions about a corpus of Arakanese texts translated from literary Burmese into Persian. The translations were commissioned by the Colonel Sir John Murray (1745-1822) and were written in Calcutta around 1770. We will try to locate this endeavour

within the contemporary scholarly environment, and look at the agenda behind what seems to have been an unsuccessful attempt at exploring the culture of a kingdom that was soon to be conquered by its Burmese neighbour. The Burmese conquest of Arakan in 1785 probably accelerated the loss and dispersal of the written archives of the kingdom. Therefore, the manuscripts preserved in the Staatsbibliothek open a unique window on the religious, medical and legal literature of the kingdom of Arakan. For this preliminary study, our interest in this corpus of texts is threefold and can be summed up with the following questions: What motivated the selection and the translation of such texts? How and by whom have they been translated? To what extent do they open new perspectives in the field of Arakanese studies and the study of Persianate societies?

Claire Gallien, Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier

«Rewriting the History of India Before the 'Oriental Renaissance': From Classical to Persian Sources»



Raymond Schwab argued in his book *La renaissance* orientale (1950) that the learning of Sanskrit by European scholars, their newly acquired access to a corpus of texts written in Sanskrit, and their subsequent studies of these original sources on India, marked not only an

epistemological shift in the history of orientalism but also a deep cultural shift in Europe, since these studies were, for the first time, published in French, English and other European languages and widely circulated. However, this reading of orientalism fails to take into account another major shift in the history of the discipline, marked, this time, by the use of Persian sources on Indic knowledge. Digging into a tradition of Persian translations and works on India, and sometimes reinforcing that tradition by ordering new translations and works to be produced by their moonshes or by Hindu scholars fluent in Persian, the British orientalists present in India in the eighteenth century thus greatly extended the scope of European knowledge on the subcontinent thanks to that corpus. The fields which interested the British were wide ranging and included Persian studies and translations on Indian religion, history, geography, sciences, arts, etc. I would like to focus on one particular field of study, namely that of Indian history, and study the Persian works on Indian history translated into English by eighteenth-century orientalists. The questions that I will try to answer are the following: What kind of new historical knowledge did it provide? How was it translated/integrated into European historiography? How did this corpus complement or replace the previous ones? How was it received?

Perso-Indica: A Survey of Persian Works on Indian Learned Traditions

www.perso-indica.net

Perso-Indica is a project that will produce an analytical survey of Persian works on Indian culture, written in South Asia during the pre-modern era (13th-19th centuries). The production of Persian texts on Hindu traditions and sciences represents one of the greatest transfers of knowledge to have occurred between different Asian cultures. However, it remains one of the least studied. Perso-Indica will comprise more than three hundred titles and one thousand sources, including manuscripts, lithographs and published sources. Perso-Indica intends to become the first major reference work for this field of studies. It will provide an innovative contribution to our understanding of the history of Persianate and Indian intellectual and literary traditions and their cross-cultural interactions, as well as of pre-modern South Asian identity constructions. This project aims at offering a new epistemic vision of the history of translation into Muslim languages, its relation to the scholarship of non-Muslim cultures, and of the history of translations from Sanskrit into other Asian languages. Perso-Indica has been launched as an online resource with free access to its entries (www.persoindica.net).

Perso-Indica est un projet qui se propose de constituer un répertoire analytique des textes en langue persane sur la culture indienne, composées en Asie du sud à la période prémoderne (XIIIe-XIXe siècles). La production de textes en persan sur les traditions et les sciences des hindous compte parmi les plus grands mouvements de transfert du savoir réalisés entre différentes cultures asiatiques. Il reste cependant un des moins étudiés. Perso-Indica recensera plus de 300 titres et plus de 1 000 sources, entre manuscrits, lithographies et éditions. Perso-Indica a pour objectif de devenir le premier ouvrage de référence dans ce domaine et d'apporter une contribution innovante à l'histoire des traditions intellectuelles et littéraires persanes et indiennes, de leurs interactions et de la construction identitaire en Asie du sud à l'époque prémoderne. Ce projet vise à offrir une nouvelle vision épistémique de l'histoire des traductions vers les langues de l'islam, de leur rapport aux cultures savantes non musulmanes, et de l'histoire des traductions du sanskrit vers d'autres langues asiatiques. Perso-Indica a été lancée sous forme électronique et ses entrées seront librement accessibles en ligne (www.perso-indica.net).

Organisation du colloque :

Fabrizio Speziale, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3 - UMR 'Mondes iranien et indien', Paris. Avec la collaboration de Emmanuel Giraudet, Naveen Kanalu, Anna Lewin et Sharareh Salehi.

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