

SHAH-NĀMA-I JANGIZĪ: REWRITING OF JĀMĪ' AL-TAWĀRĪKH IN VERSE

ŞEHNĀME-İ CENGİZİ: CĀMĪ'Ü'T-TEVĀRĪH'İN MANZUM BİR NÜSHASI

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Abstract

Shah-nāma-i Jangizī is a verse work; its original name is Tārīkh-i Ghāzān Khān, and was written by the poet Shamsuddīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī Kāshānī. A good preserved copy of the work, which is a summary of the Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh, and dates back to the time of Ölceytü Khan, is registered in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts under the number 1953. This manuscript, which was copied by Muḥammad b. 'Alī, was written with 19 lines of taliq style, 25x17,5 cm in size, contains 207 folios and 24 miniatures in it. In the article, this work will be introduced with respect to the physical properties, its historical value, and the reasons and conditions of copyright, in general terms.

Keywords

Shah-nāma-i Jangizī, Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh, Shamsuddīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī Kāshānī

Öz

Şehnâme-i Cengizî, asıl ismi Târîh-i Gâzân Hân olan ve şair Şemseddîn Muhammed b. 'Alī Kâşânî tarafından kaleme alınan manzum bir eserdir. Ölceytü Han zamanına kadar gelen ve Câmî'ü't-Tevârîh'in bir muhtasarı niteliğindeki eserin iyi durumdaki bir nüshası, Türk ve İslam

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Eserleri Müzesi'nde, 1953 numara ile kayıtlı bulunmaktadır. Muhammed 'Alî tarafından istinsah edilen bu nüsha, 207 vırağı havi olup 25x17,5cm ebadında, 19 satırlık talik yazıyla kaleme alınmıştır ve içinde 24 adet minyatür vardır. Söz konusu bu eser, fiziksel özellikleri yanında verdiği tarihî kıymeti havi malumat, telif sebebi ve koşulları itibariyle, ana hatlarıyla makalemizde arz edilecektir.

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Anahtar Kelimeler

Şehnâme-i Cengizî, Câmi'ü't-Tevârih, Şemseddin Muhammed b. 'Alî Kâşânî



There are several works of Persian literature which writers tried to imitate due to their fame and therefore, caused a specific series of works to occur. For instance, *Khamsa* of Niẓāmī Ganjawī, *Gulistān* of Sa'dī Shirāzī, *Dīwān* of Khāfīz, and Firdawsī's *Shah-nāma* are masterpieces that influenced not only the Persians and Persian speaking nations but also many people and artists from other countries in terms of their content, literary arts, and other superior qualities. Among them, Firdawsī's *Shah-nāma* set a model or, to put it in a better way, was *imitated* by more number of poets.

The reasons for *Shah-nāma* to attain such popularity involved the fact that no such verse with epic and legendary elements had been written before, as well as its being appreciated by many rulers who were glorified in it. The importance attached to Firdawsī by Ghazna ruler Maḥmūd after his death, encouraged the poets to write similar *shah-nāma*, while the rulers showed extra attention to such works and poets as they envied the heroes mentioned in *Shah-nāma*, who became legendary and immortal.

We can see that the imitators (*muqallidān*) of Firdawsī's *Shah-nāma* had three reasons for writing such works. The first one is that the poets wanted to satisfy their own aesthetic feelings, glorify other national heroes of Persia and complete *Shah-nāma* in literary aspects. The aspiration of the poets to gain the compliments of the ruler was the second reason for them to write such panegyrics in verse. The third reason was that rulers, who considered themselves no inferior to the legendary heroes told in *Shah-nāma*, commissioned the poets to write similar *shah-nāma* in order to immortalize their names and tell the future generations about their actions with epic works in verse.

After the Mongols acquired Persia and established the Ilkhanid State, the tradition of compiling *shah-nāma* continued and developed together with history writing under the consideration of Mongol rulers.

In the Mongolian period, it was considered that works written in verse were more popular and therefore, works of prose were re-written in verse. This, however, did not turn out to be true.

It would be useful for our memory to mention the names of *shah-nāma*-style works written in the Mongolian period. The eighteen thousand couplet-long *Jangiz-nāma* or *Shahinshāh-nāma* of Aḥmad Tabrīzī (which involves the events until 738/1338 and was dedicated to Sultan Abū Sa'īd); Nūruddīn b. Shamsuddīn

Muhammad's *Ghāzān-nāma* (completed in 763/1362) and the seventy thousand couplet-long *Zafarnāma* written by Ḥamdullāh Mustawfī are the leading works of literature that were written in the Mongolian period and continued the *shah-nāma* tradition.

About the Author

The author of the work is Shamsuddīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī Kāshānī. Exact birth date of Kāshānī is not known. He is also contemporary of the famous vizier Rashīduddīn. The poet is estimated to die in 730/1330. Kāshānī wrote a historical work in verse called *Shah-nāma-i Jangizī* which describes the events until Öljeitü Khan period (703-716/1304-1316) and summarized the work of Rashīduddīn¹.

A well-preserved copy of the book which is also known as *Tārīkh-i Ghāzān Khān* is kept at the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts (Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi) under the title of *Shah-nāma-i Jangizī* and under record number 1953². The book was copied by Muḥammad 'Alī. The copy of the manuscript has 207 folios. Dimension of the copy are 25x17.5 cm. The copy written in *ta'lik* style, written as nineteen lines and involves twenty four miniatures.

This copy, which is still kept in İstanbul³, was first pointed out by Zeki Velidi Togan⁴, and Kemal Çığ. Kemal Çığ wrote about the physical characteristics of the book in his article titled "The Catalogue of Books with Miniatures in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts" (Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi'ndeki Minyatürlü Kitapların Kataloğu) published in *Şarkiyat Mecmuası*. In our paper we used physical definitions from his article. Ord. Prof. Dr. Aydın Sayılı quoted the relevant part in *Shah-nāma-i Jangizī* and its translation in his article titled "A Verse about the Ghāzān Khan Tomb" (Gāzān Han Türbesi Hakkında Bir Manzume)⁵. The most detailed work, however, is found in Manuchahr Murtaẓawī's *Masā'il-i 'Asr-i Ilkhānān*⁶. Murtaẓawī's work relies on a copy of the manuscript which is in Paris National Library with the record number of 1443. The copy which we will be studying is

¹ Sa'īd Nafīsī, *Tārīkh-i nazm u nathr dar-Īrān wa dar-zabān-i Fārsī*, I, Tehrān 1363/1984, p. 216.

² Karl Jahn, "Study on Supplementary Persian Sources for the Mongol History of Iran", *Aspects of Altaic Civilization. Proceedings of the Fifth Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference Held at Indiana University, June 4-9 1962*, ed. Denis Sinor, Bloomington 1963, p. 201.

³ Lala İsmail Library, n. 354.

⁴ Zeki V. Togan, *Tarih-te Usül*, İstanbul 1985, p. 197.

⁵ Aydın Sayılı, "Gāzān Han Türbesi Hakkında Bir Manzume", *İran Şehinşahlığının 2500. Kuruluş Yıldönümüne Armağan*, İstanbul 1971, pp. 383-398.

⁶ Manuchahr Murtaẓawī, *Masā'il-i 'Asr-i Ilkhānān*, Tehrān 1370/1992.

different from that copy in various aspects, the number of folios being in the first place.

The Physical /Outer Characteristics of the Book

Its cover is cardboard coated with brown leather. There is a sunburst design on the cover and the border of the outer edge is gilded. Its relief ornaments are also brown. The inner and outer edges of the cover are ornamented with a line of gilded chains. The inner part of the cover is coated with silvery paper. The folios numbered 1b and 2a are completely covered with miniatures and the edges are all ornamented with gilded designs. The text starts by folio number 2b. The upper side of this folio is ornamented with an arch. It is written in double columns and the texts are surrounded with double gilded lines. The lower and upper corners of the postscripts are ornamented in triangular style until folio 6a. The headlines are written in red ink⁷. Some folios are restored and some have stains on them due to humidity. This book has 24 miniatures on the following folios: 1b, 2a, 9b, 21b, 28b, 43b, 47b, 57a, 62a, 85b, 93b, 101a, 109b, 120a, 126b, 139a, 145a, 149a, 152a, 160a, 170b, 182a, 196a, 201b. Since the miniatures were made at a period when the miniature art began to decline, their artistic aspect is weak. Only the hunting scene in the introduction part is excellent⁸.

The reason for writing this book of verse is depicted by Shamsuddīn Kāshānī in an exaggerated and contradictory way. Firstly, Kāshānī claims at the beginning of his book that the job of re-writing the work compiled by Rashīduddīn in verse style was commissioned to him by Ghazan Khan himself. The head-plate (اشارات) (فرمودن پادشاه مؤلف را نظم این کتاب) in the postscript on the 3b folio of the book and the couplet (ز شاهم بدین کار اشارت رسید که گویی ز باختم بشارت رسید) in it are the parts where he argues this claim. According to him, Ghazan Khan gave his order about the issue right after the Turkish and Mongolian parts of *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* were completed⁹. This argument, of course, deserves criticism. Because it is known that Rashīduddīn's work was not completed in the Ghazan Khan period and submitted to the following Ilkhanid ruler Öljeitü Khan. It does not seem possible that re-writing of *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* commissioned to Kāshānī by Ghazan Khan himself in order to be re-written in verse. Because, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* was not submitted

⁷ Kemal Çiğ, "Türk İslâm Eserleri Müzesi'ndeki Minyatürlü Kitapların Kataloğu", *Şarkiyat Mecmuası*, III, İstanbul 1959, p. 73.

⁸ Kemal Çiğ, *ibid*, s. 74.

⁹ (چو شد نثر تاریخ ترکان تمام غزان خواست کز نظم یابد نظام)

Ghazan Khan. As Murtaẓawī states, while Kāshānī defines himself as a poet that carries the souls of Firdawsī and Anwarī, it is a fact that he cannot reach the level of their poetry and Ghazan Khan would not commission such a work to such a poet¹⁰.

Another and more important issue is that Kāshānī claims Rashīduddīn's book to be a draft of a book in verse which he was to write later. Moreover, Kāshānī despises Rashīduddīn's work and writes: (بگویند اگر شاه فرمان دهد چو عیسی تن مرده را جان دهد) claiming that he would "resurrect *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* by converting it into verse just as Jesus Christ revives dead bodies".

Despite the claims in the book of the poet that Rashīduddīn's work was written to be converted into verse by Kāshānī upon the order of Ghazan Khan, we know that there are no records about this issue in any literature from the period. It is interesting that such an important issue did not appear in any of the sources. Besides, there is no rationale in Kāshānī's embracing "resurrection" of Rashīduddīn's work, because Rashīduddīn was a passionate and greedy vizier. Also Kāshānī would not prefer to be an enemy to him with a work that would overshadow his book. Then, the reason for Kāshānī's claim can be that he wanted his book and name to reach eternity by using Ghazan Khan's name in it.

The book, in terms of content, is a summary of Rashīduddīn written in verse. While the parts quoted from Rashīduddīn's book called *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* are told briefly, some parts do not rely on Rashīduddīn's book and do not appear in his work. For instance, while the information given by Aydın Sayılı about the tomb constructed in the city of Sham near Tabriz appears briefly in Rashīduddīn's book, but Kāshānī gives detailed information about the construction process of the tomb and some problems encountered during the process. This gives us the impression that we can have historical information about the Ilkhanids by comparing *Shah-nāma-i Jangizī* to *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*.

¹⁰ Murtaẓawī, *ibid*, p. 598-600.

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1b-2a: Entrance of the Manuscript



2b-3a: Preface or Introduction of the Manuscript (Muqaddima)



4a: The Couplet in which Kāshānī's Name is Mentioned for the First Time in the Manuscript



