# A Linguistic Conversion
## Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Qatīl and the Varieties of Persian (ca. 1790)

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**Abstract**   The paper deals with Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Qatīl, an important Persian-writing Khatri poet and intellectual active in Lucknow between the end of the 18th and the first two decades of the 19th century, focusing on his ideas regarding the linguistic geography of Persian. Qatīl dealt with the geographical varieties of Persian mainly in two texts, namely the *Shajarat al-amānī* and the *Nahr al-faṣāḥat*, but relevant observations are scattered in almost all of his works, including the doxographic *Haft tamāshā*. The analysis provided here, which is also the first systematic study on a particularly meaningful part of Qatīl's socio-linguistic thought and one of the very few explorations of Qatīl's work altogether, not only examines in detail his grammatical and rhetorical treatises, reading them on the vast background of Arabic-Persian philology, but discusses as well the interaction of Qatīl's early conversion to Shi'ite Islam with the author's linguistic ideas, in a philological-historical perspective.

**Summary**   1. Qatīl's writings and the Persian language question. –2. Defining Persian in and around the *Shajarat al-amānī*. –3. Layered hegemonies in the *Nahr al-faṣāḥat*. –4. Qatīl's conversion and the linguistic idea of Iran. –Primary sources. –Secondary sources.

**Keywords**   Indo-Persian. Qatīl. Persian language. Lucknow. Shī'a. Conversion.

> Nella storia del linguaggio i confini di spazio e di tempo, e altri,
> sono tutti pura fantasia
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> (Bartoli 1910, p. 900)

## 1   Qatīl's writings and the Persian language question

To convey the idea that someone is fluent in foreign languages – say, for instance, French – a speaker of Modern Greek may choose to say μιλάει Γαλλικά φαρσί (*milaei gallika farsi*). A strictly etymological rendering of the expression would be 'She/he speaks [the] French [language] Persian', where the word for 'Persian', *farsi*, is to be understood as an adverb, some-

thing like 'the Persian-language way' or, perhaps more closely, 'Persianly'.[1] This curious lexical episode, where a glottonym such as φαρσί/Persian acquires the semantically specialized adverbial meaning of 'fluently', a direct heritage of the Ottoman era not surviving in modern standard Turkish, alludes to the pragmatic implications of the dominant multilingual practices – and corresponding linguistic poliphonies – in the pre-modern and early modern eastern half of the Islamicate world. Its persistence – paradoxically enough, given the strictly linguistic field of exercise – seems indeed to defy the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century projects of linguistic 'purification' by Hellenists, who often perceived the spoken varieties (and most written registers as well) of the Greek of their time as *mixovarvaros*, i.e. 'mixed-barbarian'.[2] The adverb φαρσί, of course, does not provide any indications as to which form of 'Persian' would be the adverbial touchstone for measuring someone's cosmopolitan ability to elegantly dominate a prestigious non-native idiom. At the western end of the Persianate polycentric space, Persian, to be linguistically crystallized as the antonomasia of 'The (Foreign Refined) Language' must of course be a sort of Saussurian abstraction of 'Persian', and the implied reference is thus not so much to any Iranian natural-historical language as to the perceived idea of the literary medium spread and employed, at various degrees, from Mostar to Linxia up to the 1800s, in fruitful dialogue with most of the various coexistent vernacular and non-vernacular traditions. A lexical fossil of linguistic transregionality, the Greek-Ottoman expression, which is reminiscent of the symbolic capital retained by the idea of Persian in Eurasia up to the colonial era, urges us as well – pretextually and contrastingly as it were – to pose many a question, mingling Pierre Bourdieu's with Bert Fragner's terminology, about the shifts in the dominant *doxa* and, consequently, in the reproduction of the linguistic *habitus* within the rapidly transforming Persophonie and its pedagogical and andragogical institutions. As a matter of fact, beyond any fetishization of the cosmopolis, a 'Persian language question', had been arising, between Iran and South Asia, precisely at the same time during which the spectre of the just evoked so-called 'Greek language controversy' was haunting Southeastern Europe and Asia Minor, in a broader interconnected context dominated by processes of nationalization, boundarization, identification,

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**1**  Mpampiniotes' monolingual dictionary explains the term with the adverb απταίστως 'fluently'; the dictionary adds that the word can also be used, more generally, to indicate that a student has learned a lesson 'thoroughly'. As far as the etymology is concerned, Mpampiniotis concludes, quite unsatisfactorily: «from Turkish *farsi* «Persian» (περσικά), since the Turkish language contains many Persian words» (Mpampiniotes 1998, p. 1894).

**2**  I am thinking here of intellectuals such as Evgenios Voulgaris (1716-1806) and Adamantios Korais (1748-1833), on whom see for instance Rotolo 1965 and Mackridge 2009, pp. 80-101.

exclusion, reduction and re-canonization. Vindicating the essential role of philology and the persistent centrality of the forms of knowledge related to (poetical) language in the Islamicate curriculum, their marked long term tendency to connect to the textual past and their consistent ubiquity within the wider Persianate world,[3] I will introduce here some relevant material pertaining to linguistic history by a North Indian author, Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Qatīl, whose biographical figure and intellectual production, not-withstanding their obvious significance, has been thus far very little stud-ied. In particular, I will present a selection of passages from Qatīl's works on Persian language – whose relevance was already recognized by Henry Blochmann (1868, p. 32) – looking for a first plausible socio-textual reading of his treatment of the regional, and local, varieties of Persian. With the aim of going beyond the flat and heuristically useless figure of the 'purist' and more or less 'Iranophile' Khatri of Nawabi decadence, and suggesting the linguistic-literary *pendants* of his conversion to Shi'ite Islam, I will re-ject any simplistic and anachronistic Iran vs. India polarization, which risks to dualize a much more pluralistic and nuanced continuity and polyphony, reducing to an essentialized monolingual monolithe the multilingual world of Iran itself. Hopefully, this will also help to provide further material to articulate nuanced replies to Shamsur Rahman Faruqi's questions on the loss of Indian self-confidence in Persian proficiency (Faruqi 1998, pp. 1-2). In a more theoretical way, the excerpts introduced here might also stimu-late further discussions on what Francesca Orsini has called «multilingual local», especially insofar as the complex productive relations (in a rapidly transforming literary and linguistic scene) between the non-static poles of 'learned traditions' and 'spoken language' are concerned.[4] While the texts we are dealing with have quickly become «homeless» (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001), an author and literary persona like Qatīl is at home in Lucknow as well as in Kabul, Isfahan and Tabriz, in an extended socio-semiotic dimension defying any comfortable 'Colonial', 'Nationalistic', 'Iranian' or 'Indo-Persian' label (Mana Kia's discussions of geocultural meanings and the location of 'Indo-Persian'[5] come to mind, as do Farzin Vejdani's recent observations on the inadequacy of a catch-all coloniser-colonised – itself

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[3] An exemplary case, particularly interesting here for its close connection, in the Per-sianate environment, with the analysis of phonological and morphological structures, is that of the cosmopolitan continuity of the study of the 'science of rhyme' (*'ilm-i qāfiya*): as far as the context of Awadh is concerned, an important commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn-i Ṭūsī's authoritative thirteenth century treatise (the best study on Ṭūsī's work is Landau 2013) was completed in Lucknow by Sa'd Allāh-i Murādābādī as late as 1865, followed by several reprints and an Urdu translation (Pellò 2003, pp. 18-25).

[4] I think, for instance, of Orsini 2012.

[5] See for instance Kia 2014 and her unpublished conference paper.

quite colonising – discourse for contexts such as those analysed here[6]).

A quick bio-bibliographical sketch, based on an array of primary and secondary sources,[7] will help to introduce the main linguistic themes of this article. Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan, generally known by his *takhalluṣ* (pen-name) of Qatīl, was born in Delhi in 1759 in a Khatri family. His father, Dargāhī Mal, moved from Panjab during the reign of Muḥammad Shāh (1719-1748), settling first in the village of Dasna and, subsequently, in Delhi, at the invitation of the nobleman Hidāyat 'Alī Khān Bahādur. Educated for a prominent *munshī* career (his ancestor Siyālkotī Mal Vārasta was a notable lexicographer and literary critic[8]), the young Hindu student became early in his life the disciple of a Shi'ite poet of Iranian origin, Muḥammad Bāqir Shahīd Iṣfahānī, under whose influence, according to Muṣḥafī, he converted to Shi'ite Islam at the age of eighteen (Muṣḥafī 1934, p. 46; according to other sources, the conversion happened before, when he was 14 or 17). He worked for a while in the army of Najaf Khān Ẕū 'l-Fiqār al-Dawla in the Delhi area, and in 1783-84 he finally moved to Lucknow, where he became an established poet, philologist and teacher of Persian. According to the *taẕkira Sham'-i anjuman*, he also spent some time in Kalpi with 'Imād al-Mulk Fīrūzjang III (Navāb 1875, p. 390), and several sources also mention his travels to Iran and Iraq. He died during the reign of Ghāzī al-Dīn Ḥaydar (various dates are indicated, including 1817, 1822 and 1825), and was buried in the Qaysar Bagh of Lucknow, which was, at that time, a *ḥusayniya* (i.e. a assembly hall, known in South Asia as *imāmbara*, devoted to Shi'ite commemoration ceremonies). A polyglot (in addition to Persian and Hindi/Urdu he mastered Arabic and Turkish as well) and prolific writer, Qatīl wrote all of his important works in Persian, and acquired during his life a short-lived status as one of the leading 'masters' of Persian poetry in Lucknow.[9] However, more than for his poetic works (neither his *dīvān* nor his historical *maṣnavī* entitled *Ṣubḥ-i bahār*

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**6**  An articulate discussion on the subject, specifically relating to the Qajar period, can be found in the introduction to Vejdani 2015.

**7**  Besides Qatīl's works, these include: Abū Ṭālib ibn Muḥammad Iṣfahānī (MS, f. 360*r*), Āftāb Rāy (1982, pp. 119-121), Alam, Subrahmanyam (2012, pp. 423-426), Anūsha (2001, 3, pp. 2032-2034), Anvarī Farīdābādī (1939), Hadi (1995, p. 490), Hindī (1958, pp. 172-173), Marshall (1967, pp. 397-398), Mīrānjān Ajmalī (MS, ff. 123*r-v*), Munzavī (1983-1997, 1, p. 841; 2, p. 1015; 3, p. 2534), Muṣḥafī (1934, p. 46), Najm-i Ṭabāṭabā'ī (MS, ff. 149*v*-150*r*), Navāb (1875, pp. 390-392), Pellò (2012, pp. 161-168), Sprenger (1854, 1, pp. 170, 535).

**8**  See the notes by Sīrūs Shamīsā in the introduction to the dictionary *Muṣṭalaḥāt al-shu'arā* (Siyālkotī Mal Vārasta 2001, pp. 25-36).

**9**  Some notes on Qatīl's school can be found in Pellò 2012, pp. 146-9. The dismissive tones attributed by Āzād to Ghālib when talking about Qatīl, who was «only a Khatrī from Farīdābād», are well known (see Āzād 1982, p. 505).

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have been published[10]), Qatīl is remembered for his scholarly works in prose.[11] Beyond the didactical *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib*, a ponderous repertoire of poetic tropes organized in a thematic fashion,[12] and the doxographical *Haft tamāshā*, an invaluable work on South Asian ethno-religious groups, what primarily concerns us here are the three treatises variously devoted to linguistic subjects and especially Persian (and, in one case, also Turkish) language, grammar, rhetoric and letter writing. The oldest of these, the *Shajarat al-amānī*, was completed in 1206/1791 and dedicated to Qatīl's friend and collaborator Sayyid Amān ʿAlī. In the preface, the author writes that the «*Shajarat al-amānī* consists of some lines describing some things which must necessarily be known as far as Persian poetry and prose are concerned» (*saṭr-ī chand-ast dar bayān-i baʿẓī chīzhā ki dar naẓm u naṣr-i fārsī az dānistan-i ān gurīz nabāshad*) (Qatīl 1872, p. 2). The work is subdivided into six sections called *farʿ* (pl. *furūʿ*, i.e. 'branches'), each of which leads to some *ṣamara* or 'fruits'. Namely, the first *farʿ* is devoted to the «essence of word and its subdivisions» (*māhiyat-i kalima va taqsīm-i ān*) (Qatīl 1872, p. 2), with four *ṣamara*: 1) the nature of 'word' (*kalima*), the distinction between *kalima* and *lafẓ* 'expression', and the (traditional) tripartite subdivision of *kalima* in name (*ism*), verb (*fiʿl*) and particle (*ḥarf*); 2) the name (*ism*); 3) the verb (*fiʿl*); 4) the particle (*ḥarf*) (Qatīl 1872, pp. 3-4). The second *farʿ*, devoted to the indispensability of the 'word' (*kalima*) and its possible elisions in normal speech, bears only one fruit, where the author, following the traditional *ḥarf*-based 'morphematic' grammatical analysis already found *in nuce* in Shams-i Qays (as observed by Zumurrudiyān 2000), critically describes at length the peculiarities of the *kāf* (e.g. the declarative conjunction *ki*, the diminutive suffix *-ak*, etc.), of the *yā* (e.g. the ending *-ī* of relative adjectives, the verbal desinence of the second person singular *-ī*, etc.) and so on (Qatīl 1872, pp. 4-13). The third *farʿ*, on composition (*tarkīb*), has two fruits, collectively describing the *iẓāfa* connection, the different typologies of compounds, nominal and verbal phrases etc. (Qatīl 1872, pp. 14-15). The fourth *farʿ*, which will be at the centre of our discussion here, is devoted to the «description of Persian language» (*dar bayān-i zabān-i fārsī*), in three *ṣamara*: the «language of the Turanians» (*dar zabān-i tūrāniyān*), i.e. Central Asian Persian, the «Persian of the Iranians» (*dar fārsī-yi īrāniyān*), and the «Persian of the

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10   The copy of Qatīl's *dīvān* which I have consulted at the Rampur Raza Library contains a total of ca. 2200 *bayt*s, mostly of *ghazal*s, but including *tarkīb-band*s, *tarjīʿ-band*s, *mukhammas, marthiya*s and *rubāʿī*s as well (Qatīl Ms). A copy of Qatīl's *maṣnavī* is kept at the Punjab University Library of Lahore (n. 7683-o-456).

11   A list, with short descriptions, of Qatīl's works can be found in Anusha (2001, 2, pp. 2033-4).

12   The printed copy, published in 1291/1874 by Naval Kishor, consists of 254 lithographed pages (Qatīl 1874b).

people of India» (Qatīl 1872, pp. 15-20). The fifth *far'*, in two *ṣamara*, focuses on *faṣāḥat* 'clarity of expression' at the level both of single words and of sentences (Qatīl 1872, pp. 20-22), while the sixth and final chapter, in a single *ṣamara*, briefly explores the closely-related rhetorical territoires of *balāghat* 'eloquence' or better perhaps, *elocutio* (Qatīl 1872, pp. 22-23).

Most of these subjects will receive further attention in the slightly later *Nahr al-faṣāḥat* (1214/1799). As Qatīl himself states, the work was composed at the request of Mīr Muḥammad Ḥusayn, the nephew of the above-mentioned dedicatee Mīr Amān 'Alī. The *Nahr al-faṣāḥat* is a relatively lengthy work (the 1874 printed edition is 69 pages, as opposed to the 24 of the *Shajarat al-amānī*) subdivided into ten 'waves' (*mawj*), complementing the preceding work with a more practical and applicative attitude and plenty of examples, both in poetry and prose, respectively focusing on: 1) «the teaching of some things whose abandonment is mandatory and recommended» (*ta'līm-i ba'ẓī chīzhā ki tark-i ān vājib u mustaḥsin-ast*), devoted to the elimination of some non-standard written and oral linguistic practices (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 3-12); 2) the use of some particular verbs (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 12-15); 3) «the explanation of what is necessary and what is recommended» (*dar bayān-i vājibāt u mustaḥsināt*), i.e. on some morphosyntactical rules and conventions of the Persian language (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 15-23); 4) «the mandatory additions» (*zavā'id-i vājibī*), for instance the use, in prose, of some numerators such as *sar* 'head' to count horses or *zanjīr* 'chain' to count elephants (Qatīl 1874a, p. 23); 5) «the description of the compounds» (*dar bayān-i murakkabāt*) (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 23-25); 6) «the description of prescriptions and elisions» (*dar bayān-i muqaddarāt u maḥẕūfāt*) (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 25-36); 7) the theory and practice of figurative speech (*'ilm-i bayān*) (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 36-41); 8) the Persian language, again, as we shall see, subdivided into the three varieties of Iran, Turan and India (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 41-42); 9) «the differences between the poetry of the ancients and the moderns, and the prose of the Indians and the native speakers» (*dar bayān-i farq-i ash'ār-i mutaqaddimīn va muta'akhkhirīn va naṣr-i hindiyān va ahl-i zabān*), directly connected to the preceding 'wave' (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 42-43); 10) «the teaching of how to write prose» (*dar ta'līm-i taḥrīr-i naṣr*): the latter section, which covers more than one third of the entire book, includes a rich set of ready-to-use expressions and linguistic-literary protocols for the *munshī* as well as some precious specimens of letters written in different styles and for potential everyday situations (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 42-69).

A highly refined and multilingual approach marks the third, and last, linguistic work of Qatīl mainly dedicated to Persian, the *Chār sharbat* (completed in 1217/1802). The book, where the author boasts of his knowledge of the Turkish language from the very first pages (Qatīl 1845, pp. 2-3), consists of four sections, as the title itself suggests, called *sharbat* 'beverages', with some sub-chapters called *chānāgh*, a learned Turkic word meaning 'crater'. The first *sharbat* is devoted to metrics and rhyme (*'arūẓ*

va qāfiya); the second deals with the «expressions of the native speakers» (muṣṭalaḥāt-i ahl-i zabān); the third section discusses the techniques and different styles (such as those of literati, sufis and secretaries) of letter-writing, again with several textual examples; the fourth and last section is, finally, a grammar of late Eastern Türki[13] with different chapters for substantive, verbs, etc.[14]

## 2 Defining Persian in and around the *Shajarat al-amānī*

Observations regarding the differences between the regional varieties of Persian and, more generally, 'correct' and 'uncorrect' linguistic usages, are scattered throughout Qatīl's works, including the doxographic *Haft tamāshā* as well as the author's letters (*Ruqʿāt*), as we shall see. However, the main sources for Qatīl's geographical taxonomy of the world of Persian are, not surprisingly, his first two, and most strictly linguistic, treatises, where, as I have briefly noted above, the author deals with the subject in dedicated chapters. In the older of the two, the *Shajarat al-amānī*, Qatīl introduces his treatment of the subject in the fourth chapter (*farʿ*), «on the Persian language» (*dar zabān-i fārsī*).[15] The first of the three sections into which the chapter is divided, Qatīl informs the reader, is devoted to the «language of the Turanians (*zabān-i tūrāniyān*)». Before taking on the task of describing it, Qatīl makes some interesting general remarks regarding the 'correct use' of the Persian language, at the same time making clear the main didactic aim of his work:

> Since the pillar of writing poetry and prose in Persian is the correctness of the language (*ṣiḥḥat-i zabān*) and the accuracy in following the native speakers (*durustī-yi tatabbuʿ-i ahl-i zabān*), the secretary and the poet must be aware of Persian peculiar vocabulary and conversation, and the student of this discipline should not interfere with the current language (*rūzmarra*) of the native speakers (*ṣāḥibzabānān*) and make use of what

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**13**   This is made clear, among other things, from the presence of the post-terminal perfective in Up- and the optative in GAy. I am grateful to my friend and colleague Matthias Kappler for his invaluable turcological advice.

**14**   This polyglot approach of Qatīl is apparent not only in his collaboration with Inshā Allāh Khān in the composition of the famous *Daryā-yi laṭāfat* (as the author of the section on prosody and rhetoric), the first grammar (written in Persian) of the Urdu language (1802), but also in a little known grammar of the Arabic language, also in Persian, entitled *Qānūn-i mujaddad*, a copy of which is currently held at the British Library (see Rieu 1881, p. 795), about which Qatīl himself talks repeatedly in his letters (Qatīl 1887, pp. 8, 30, 68).

**15**   Some interesting notes on the treatment of the varieties of Persian in this text and in the *Nahr al-faṣāḥat* can be found in Quraishi 1969.

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he finds in their books, considering himself an imitator, since there is a great difference between what is original (*aṣl*) and what is reported (*naql*). The imitator (*muqallid*) is held in consideration by the knower of the language (*zabāndān*) only through his hard work in poetry and prose. (Qatīl 1872, p. 16)

The non-native professional user of the Persian language, as Qatīl himself is, must adhere strictly to a standard which is loosely identified here with the usage of native speakers (*ahl-i zabān*). A simple, dicotomic hierarchy, a reminder of the more complex one described by Faruqi (1998, pp. 1-2), is immediately provided: on the one hand the non-native (Indian) learner, read as a *muqallid* (imitator), and, on the other hand, the knower of the language (*zabāndān*). The latter is modeled on the image of the native speaker of the *ahl-i zabān* but, subtly enough, not completely limited to it (devoting space to transitional socio-linguistic figures such as that of Qatīl himself). A parallel polarized dicotomy is quickly drawn between a 'book Persian', which is the main source of the imitator, and the current language (*rūzmarra*), which is off-limits for the beginner or the amateur but not for the 'near-native' teacher personified by the writer himself.[16] A proper application of *taqlīd* – i.e. imitation and adherence to the standards of vocabulary and conversation – will ensure the discent the most desired prize, the prestige coming from the recognition by the linguistic authority personified by the *zabāndān*.[17] Linguistic creativity by the *muqallid* is, then, at the very least problematic:

This discourse is supported by what they say about Mīrzā Bīdil – mercy be upon him – who invented the idiom *khirām kāshtan* (lit. 'to seed a graceful walking') in the elegy for his son, and also *imṣubḥ* (this morning) and *imshām* (tonight): the reason for the mistake found in these idioms is the fact that the above-mentioned Mirzā [Bīdil] was Indian. As a matter of fact, if he had been from the land of Isfahan or another city in the country of Iran, the abstruse uses (*shuturgurbahā*) of which he

16   It is fascinating to observe how some fifty years later, in the context of Napoleon III France, the Polish scholar Aleksander Borejko Chodźko would write, in the preface to his *Grammaire de la langue persane*, that: «La langue usuelle est bien le persan, le seul persan vrai: la langue de la cour, des lettres et de la nation. Je ne connait pas même de langue qui ait un caractère de nationalitè aussi fortement déterminé, et qui soit en même aussi soigneusement cultivée» (Chodźko 1852, p. II). Chodźko – who served as translator at the Russian missions in Tabriz and Tehran and as consul at Rasht during the 1830s – writes these lines while lamenting the absence of European instruments for learning the «langue usuelle» as opposed to the artificial «persan litteraire»: the contrast is closely reminiscent of Qatīl's observations, projected onto the screen of nineteenth century nationalistic discourse.

17   It should not go unnoticed thar both *taqlīd* and *muqallid* are also technically characterised terms in Shi'ite *fiqh*, building a methodological and hermeneutical bridge between the linguistic and the juridical domains, as we shall articulate later on in this paper.

is accused in his poetry, so excellent in meaning and new endeavours, would not have been sanctioned and no one would have said a word in dismissing him […]. The truth is that whatever interventions (*taṣarruf*) the native speakers operate in their own language (*zabān-i khwud*), the imitators are not allowed to say that much about them. (Qatīl 1872, p. 16)

The choice of Bīdil, the most influential master of the poetical 'new diction' of *tāzagūyī* in late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Delhi, as the object of Qatīl's linguistic censorship comes as no surprise, considering Qatīl's declared adherence to the critical dictate of ʿAlī Ḥazīn and his followers.[18] More specifically, the very insistence, here and elsewhere, on the key-concept of *muḥāvara* 'idiom', but also 'spoken language' and 'conversation', echoes the central themes of the chapter on the 'science of conversation' (*ʿilm-i muḥāvara*) included by ʿAlī Ḥazīn in a little-known treatise on dialectics entitled *Muẕākarāt fī 'l-muḥāẓarāt*.[19] In the *Shajarat al-amānī*, however, Qatīl's objection is related not so much to the inventions and changes themselves as to the power to introduce them in the language: Qatīl makes it very clear that the right to modify the language belongs exclusively to those who 'possess' the language itself. In the lines that follow, he will elaborate:

Generally speaking, Persian is of two types (*naw'*), the Persian of Iran (*fārsī-yi Īrān*) and the Persian of Turan (*fārsī-yi Tūrān*). There are some expressions which are specific to the people of Turan, which are not understood by the people of Iran, and some others which are proper to the Iranians, and are unknown to the Turanians; similarly, in Iran as well as in Turan, there are some expressions which are specific to the people of each city. (Qatīl 1872, p. 16)

The traditional, persistent and problematic subdivision of 'Persian' in the various 'types' (*naw'*) of *pārsī, pahlavī, darī*,[20] etc., which can be traced

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18   Ḥazīn is mentioned by Qatīl as an authority in several places (in the *Chahār sharbat*, for instance, he is called *khāṭam al-shuʿarā al-mutaʾakhkhirīn* 'the seal of the modern poets', evoking Jāmī's towering figure (Qatīl 1845, p. 44), and, significantly, he is one of the main sources for the above-mentioned *Maẓhar al-ʿajāʾib* (see both the introduction and the *khāṭimat al-ṭabʿ*, where Qatīl's poetical library is described in detail, with Ḥazīn in second position after Niẓāmī) (Qatīl 1874b, pp. 2, 253). On the pro-Ḥazīn positions of Qatīl's ancestor, the lexicographer Siyālkotī Mal Vārasta, in the mid-eighteenth century Indo-Persian critical debate, see Shamīsā in Vārasta 2001, pp. 25-31.

19   According to the definition given by Ḥazīn himself, «*Muḥāvara* consists of the knowledge of the modes of a fluent exposition and the contingencies of speech, the embellishing of narration with stories about people, familiarity with examples, wit, elegant lines and refined anecdotes» (Ḥazīn 1998, p. 56).

20   It is worth underlining once again, in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding, that the application of the term *darī* to identify Persian as used in Afghanistan is relatively

back to the Omayyad writer Ibn al-Muqaffa' (Lazard 1971; Khānlarī 2003-4, pp. 271-281) and will still be popular among some influential intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth century,[21] is abandoned here, and no trace of it can be found in Qatīl's writings. By recalling Āẕar Baygdilī's tripartite cultural geography – Hindustan will come immediately afterwards – of the Persianate world (Kia 2014), Qatīl provides a systematization which might recall the contemporary distinctions between 'Western', 'Eastern' and 'colonial' Persian in linguistic studies (cf. Windfuhr, Perry 2009, pp. 417-41).[22] Qatīl's 'geocultural' subdivision, however, is constructed mainly on lexical contrasts, and, as we shall see, the boundaries he traces are definitely not phonological. Before going into the details of the geographical varieties, the author adds:

> When speaking and writing normal correspondence, one must choose the current usage (*rūzmarra*) of the people of Iran; when composing poetry and *inshā* in solid ornate style, one should not tie oneself to a single current usage. As a matter of fact, by doing so, one would contradict the way of the masters, and a forced attempt to look Iranian (*tamaghghul*)[23]

recent (the name of the language was officially changed to *darī* with the new Constitution of 1964) and is not directly related to the subjects we are dealing with here. Any straightforward identification of *darī* with «Afghan Persian» (*pace* Pritchett 2003, p. 884) before the 1960s is, indeed, anachronistic and erroneous, as extensively discussed in Spooner 2010, pp. 89-101 and elsewhere.

**21**  This kind of taxonomy, which, for instance, had been employed, variously re-elaborated, in the introductions to the three great Indian dictionaries of the seventeenth century (*Farhang-i Jahāngīrī, Burhān-i qāṭi'* and *Farhang-i Rashīdī*) (Injū Shīrāzī 1980, 1, pp. 13-22; Ḥusayn Tabrīzī 1964, 1, ṭ-yā; 'Abd al-Rashīd 1958, 1, p. 45), in a widespread Mughal grammar of Persian (Hānsavī 1884, pp. 4-5) and in Ārzū's refined eighteenth century philological *Muṣmir* (Ārzū 1991, pp. 4-13), will be re-proposed in European grammatical writings on Persian (for instance, Jones 1807, pp. 416-429; Lumsden 1810, p. 1) and up to the time of what is considered to be one of the first 'modern' grammars of Persian written by an Iranian, the *Dabistān-i pārsī* by Ḥabīb Iṣfahānī (1892, pp. 4-5; 2003, p. 40).

**22**  Different degrees in the acknowledgement of geographical variation are of course well-documented throughout Persian textual history. Apart from the well-known eleventh-century observations by the Khorasanian Nāṣir-i Khusraw regarding the lack of knowledge of Persian (*zabān-i fārsī*) by the renowned Tabrizi poet Qaṭrān, most probably a speaker of Āẕarī (the Iranian language of historical Azerbaijan, not to be confused with later Azeri Turkish) not always comfortable with the 'Eastern' lexicon used by the masters of the Samanid times such as «Munjīk and Daqīqī» (Nāṣir-i Khusraw 1972, p. 8), it is worth mentioning here the method described by Injū Shīrāzī in the introduction of his *Farhang-i Jahāngīrī* (where he boasts of having travelled extensively to register the regional uses) (Injū 1980, 1, pp. 9-10) and, most notably, the distinction between Iranian, Turanian and Hindustani usage already referred to, although not as systematically as in Qatīl, by Ārzū and Mukhliṣ in the eighteenth century (for instance Mukhliṣ 2013, p. 36 of the English introduction).

**23**  The term is derived from the ethnonym *mughul* and modeled on the paradigm of an Arabic verbal noun. It is Qatīl himself to give a definition of *mughul* as used in India: «The descendants of people from the lands of Iran and Turan, from wherever they are, are called in

keeps poetry far from refinedness: a written Persian which follows the use of the masters of the past is good. (Qatīl 1872, p. 16)

After having warned the «imitators» of the special care that must be taken – i.e. the necessity of being able to adapt to the socio-textual context – when dealing with the choice between the «current usage» of Iran vs. the «use of the masters of the past», Qatīl provides nearly forty examples of divergent usages between the Turanian and Iranian Persian. These are composed mostly of nouns and adjectives, but also of verbs, pronouns and idiomatic expressions, juxtaposed in contrast to their perceived standard literary and/or Iranian counterpart. The list (roughly reorganized from Qatīl 1872, pp. 16-17) includes:

1. Nouns

| Turanian | Iranian | |
|---|---|---|
| khusur | pidarzan | (father-in-law) |
| ṭughāyī | barādar-i mādar | (maternal uncle) |
| khwushdāman | mādarzan | (mother-in-law) |
| khusurpūra | barādar-i zan | (brother-in-law) |
| yazna | shawhar | (husband) |
| nīka | zan-i barādar | (sister-in-law) |
| dādar | barādar | (brother) |
| shū | shawhar | (husband) |
| pigāh | ṣubḥ | (daybreak) |
| bīgāh | shām | (evening) |
| dīna rūz | dīrūz | (yesterday) |
| ʿāfiyat | zikr | (spiritual exercises) |
| sū | ṭaraf | (direction) |
| khubcha | chūbdastī | (walking stick) |
| sarsurkhak-i bāzārī | shamʿ | (candle) |
| garmak | shalgham | (turnip) |
| lablabu | chughundur | (beet) |
| pūz | sīr | (garlic) |
| qaltabān | qurramsāq | (pimp) |
| (zan-i) mānda | zan-i ṭalāqdāda | (repudiated woman) |

India *mughul* and *mughulbachcha*» (Qatīl 1875, p. 113). Given the context and the reference to the *rūzmarra*, I suggest in my translation that Qatīl is here referring in particular to Iran.

2. Verbs and verbal nouns

| Turanian | Iranian | |
|---|---|---|
| *pālīdan/kāftan* | *justan* | (to search) |
| *bar tāftan-i tīr* | *andākhtan-i tīr* | (to throw an arrow> to fire) |
| *raftagī* | *rafta* and *raftanī* | (gone; that must go) |
| *shistan* | *nishastan* | (to sit) |
| *khāstan* | *bar khāstan* | (to get up) |
| *savār shudan-i āb* | *ziyād shudan-i āb* | (to overflow (water)) |
| *savār shudan-i rūz* | *guẕashtan-i ruz* | (to wear away (day)) |
| *pāyīdan* | *qarār numūdan* | (to establish) |
| *khusbīdan* | *khwābīdan* | (to sleep) |
| *māndan* | *nihādan* | (to put; to place) |
| *māndan/nihādan* | *guẕāshtan* | (to put; to place) |
| *khalānīdan* | *gāyīdan* | (to fuck) |
| *pāyīn shudan* | *furūd āmadan* | (to descend) |
| *qurbān-at ravam* | *qurbān-at shavam* | (may I be sacrificed for you) |

3. Pronouns

| Turanian | Iranian | |
|---|---|---|
| *vay* | *ū* | (he/she) |

4. Interjections

| Turanian | Iranian | |
|---|---|---|
| *ārī* | *balī* | (yes) |

After having drawn a first principal geographical-linguistic boundary, Qatīl proceeds to describe some local features within the Turanian variety, again basing them on lexical peculiarities:

> ʿāfiyat, *sarsurkhak-i bāzārī*, *khūbcha*, *garmak*, *lablabū* are specific to the Kabulis, and the others use these words in imitation of them, while the expressions *dādar*, *khalānīdan* and *kāftan* are typical of the people of Balkh; all the others are shared. (Qatīl 1872, p. 17)

The Kabuli sub-variety, which is, together with the speech of «the people of Balkh» the only dialect of Turanian Persian mentioned by Qatīl, when applying his theory as delineated above seems to be the most prestigious one, capable as it is of influencing the speech of the «imitators» (in this case the other Turanians). The description of Iranian Persian – actually a list of 'terms and expressions' (*alfāẓ va ʿibārāt*) deemed peculiar to the «people of Iran» – will immediately follow. Single lexical terms from a ba-

sic everyday spoken vocabulary, often explained by Qatīl with perceived 'standard'/literary words, include:[24]

> *khālū/dāyī = barādar-i mādar* 'maternal uncle'
> *darkhāna = darbār* 'court'
> *chīz = ṭaʿām* 'meal'
> *chāsht kardan = ṭaʿām-i rūz* [*khwurdan*] 'to eat lunch'
> *chi vaqt = kudām vaqt* 'when? (lit. what/which time?)'
> *shām kardan* 'to have dinner'
> *chīz khwurdan* 'to eat something'

The persistent lexical presence of Turkic loanwords in the Iranian usage can be seen in the following examples provided by Qatīl:

> *utāq = khayma* 'tent'
> *ūchāq = dīgdān* 'tripod'
> *īshik āqāsī = dārūgha-yi dīvānkhāna* 'chief usher'
> *qushūn = sipāh* 'army'
> *kashakkhāna = chawkīkhāna* 'guard house'

Notably enough, the first two examples – of which the first, *utāq*, has become contemporary standard Persian for 'room' – would not be recorded in the Indian-based late nineteenth century well-known Persian-English dictionary by Steingass. Also, as far as the relationship with the Indo-Persian milieu is concerned, the last example, *kashakkhāna* explained with *chawkīkhāna*, shows a deliberate attempt at explaining the Turkic-Persian compound used in Iran (T *kashak* 'guard' + P *khāna* 'house') with the corresponding term used in India (not in literary usage nor in Central Asia), where the first half of the compound is substituted by Hindi *chawkī* 'guard'. A significant amount of the vocabulary archived as «Iranian» by Qatīl in the *Shajarat al-amānī* comes from an abusive and obscene register (cf. also the *qaltabān/qurramsāq* 'pimp' seen above), for instance:

> *harzachāna = shakhṣ-i bīhūda* 'babbler'
> *pīzīshul = kūngushāda* 'sluggard' (lit. 'wide ass')
> *zanjalab* 'sb. whose wife is a bitch'
> *zanqaḥba* 'sb. whose wife is a prostitute'
> *kusdihmādar* 'sb. whose mother gives her pussy away'
> *kīrkhwurdakhwāhar* 'sb. whose sister has eaten a cock'
> *sinda* 'turd'
> *mardika* 'maggot (pej.)'

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**24**   The Iranian expression is on the left, followed by the explanatory synonym, when provided by the author. All the examples in the following paragraphs are from Qatīl 1872, pp. 17-19.

Qatīl's insistence on representing obscene and abusive vocabulary through-out his linguistic writings shows a clear adherence to widely-experimented lexicographic protocols (see Zipoli 1996) coupled with an evident attention to the vernacular and sub-standard usages, calling to mind interconnected approaches to obscenities and the linguistic institutionalization of later Qajar times.[25] For instance, as far as the term *pīzīshul* is concerned, it is interesting to observe in this regard that the Qajar poet, lexicographer and *taẕkira*-writer Riẓā Qulī Khān Hidāyat (1800-1871) would describe *pīzī*[26] as a synonym of *kūn* 'ass' «in the use of the common people», quoting as well a recent poetic employment of the term in an obscene line by Qā'im-i Maqām Farāhānī (Hidāyat 1871, p. 243). A similar attitude is adopted by Qatīl while illustrating common Iranian sayings and idiomatic sentences, where obscene and abusive language occurs alongside normal ready-to-use expressions of the spoken language. Among the several examples we find: greetings and ceremonies (*ta'āruf*) such as *shab ba khayr* and *shab ba sa'ādat* 'good evening/night', *bifarmāyīd* 'please', 'please take a seat', *khwushāmadīd* 'welcome', *khwushyāftam* 'my pleasure', *'arẕ kunam kh-idmat-i mulāzimān-i shumā* 'I present to the service of your attendants'; non-standard expression such as *tūy-i hujra nishasta* 'sitting in the room' (to exemplify the use of *tūy* instead of *dar* 'in'); idiomatic uses as in *dar dam-i darvāza nishasta būdam* 'I was sitting in front of the door' and *farzand-i kujā-ī* 'where are you from?' (lit. 'you are the son of where?'), in contrast to the more elevated *mardum-i kujā-ī* (lit. 'you are the people of where?');[27] teasing expressions such as *shuma īn chak u chāna kujā ba ham rasānīd* 'where did you get this pomposity?'; curses and abuses such as *chashm-ash kūr shavad* 'may he become blind', *īn ham 'ajab kharkus-ī-st* 'this is also a real moron' (lit. 'donkey-pussy'), *ba kus-i zan-ash mīkhandad* 'he laughs at his wife's pussy', etc. After completing his relatively long exploration of the Iranian spoken dimension, Qatīl gets back to the Iranian-Turanian contrast:

> Summing up, the expression which we provided as correspective of those used by the Turanians are commonly used among the people of Iran. The latter pronounce (*ba ṭalaffuẕ bar ārand*) *ghayn* instead of *qāf*, and vice-versa: *ghuncha > quncha* 'rose-bud'), *gharīb al-vaṭan > qarīb al-*

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[25] Notably enough, the most important Iranian scholar of Persian grammar of the nine-teenth century, the already mentioned Mīrzā Ḥabīb Iṣfahānī, was also a prominent and prolific author of *hazliyāt*, among which two *maṣnavī*s stand out for their philologically refined lexical research, namely the *Chahārgāh-i kus* (The Four Seasons of the Pussy) and the *Kīrnāma* (The Book of the Cock) (see, respectively, Zipoli 1999 and Ḥabīb Iṣfahānī 2004).

[26] Significantly, as in the Turkic cases of *utāq* and *ūchāq* seen above, neither *pīzī* nor the compound *pīzīshul* are recorded in the well-known *Comprehensive Persian-English Diction-ary* by Francis J. Steingass (1892).

[27] Cf. present day standard Persian *ahl-i kujā-ī* and colloquial *baccha kujā-ī*.

*vaṭan* 'away from home', 'displaced', *qurramsāq > ghurramsāgh* 'pimp', *zanqaḥba > zanghaḥba* 'sb. whose wife is a prostitute'. Instead of *alif* they very often use *vāv*: *jān* 'soul' becomes *jūn* and *nān* 'bread' becomes *nūn*. The well-educated and common people talk the same way (*ba hamīn nasq guftugū kunand*), and even if some of them, by way of affectation, avoid such uses, the general situation is like this. (Qatīl 1872, p. 18)

Some innovative phonetical traits of Western Persian are mentioned: the converging pronounciation of both the voiced velar fricative *ghayn* and the voiceless uvular stop *qāf* as a voiced uvular stop [ɢ] or, in unstressed intervocalic position, a voiced velar fricative [ɣ], and the the passage of /ɑː/ to /uː/ in some specific cases. In another passage, at the beginning of the *Shajarat al-amānī*, Qatīl had mentioned in passing the alternative use, in Turan and Iran, of *majhūl* (/eː/ /oː/) and *maʿrūf* (/iː/ /uː/) phonemes in some specific cases (Qatīl 1872, p. 4). However, more than the scattered phonological observations in themselves, it is the socio-linguistic attention shown by Qatīl that stands out here: as far as the authority in spoken and sub-standard Iranian Persian is concerned, he observes, no difference is to be found among social classes. He will soon get back to such diastratic issues, while other geographic aspects are dealt with in the paragraph immediately following:

> Once you have learned this, learn as well that the Isfahanis use the term *tūy* instead of *dar* 'in' […], *marg* (lit. 'death') instead of *qasam* 'oath' […] *bifarmāyīd* instead of *binishīnīd* 'please take a seat', which, we have seen, is typical of them and the others have learnt from them. *Kharkus* (lit. 'donkey-pussy'), *gāvkūn* (lit. 'cow-ass') instead of *aḥmaq* 'stupid', *man-rā* instead of *ma-rā* 'me', *shaw* instead of *shab* 'night' are all expressions of the Khorasanis. The Isfahanis change every *alif* in *vāv*, whereas the Isfahanis only change in *vāv* the *alif* which precedes a nasalized *nūn* (*nūn-i ghana*). The latter, because of the speed of their letters, elide the original letters: so *rīkhta* 'poured' becomes *rīta* and *sūkhta* 'burned' becomes *sūta*; *bāshī* instead of *qurramsāq* 'pimp' is also an expression of theirs. (Qatīl 1872, pp. 18-19)

Just as the prestigious dialect of Kabul influences the other Turanian sub-varieties, the local Isfahani Persian is 'learnt' by the other Iranian speakers, being for Qatīl, as we shall see, the 'best' among all the varieties of Persian. In such a geo-linguistic context, North India comes immediately afterwards:

> Third *ṣamara*, on the description of the Persian of the people of India, and specifically of those who are not imitators of and intimate with the people of Iran. It is of two kinds: the first is the language of the books,

which, notwithstanding the fact that it is different from the current use (*ruzmarra*) of both languages (i.e. Turanian and Iranian Persian), is correct. (Qatīl 1872, p. 19)

These observations are followed by an exemplary specimen of some paragraphs. Qatīl, then, goes on:

The other is natural Persian (*fārsī-yi ṭabʻī*), in which they light heartedly (*bī-taḥqīq*) introduce in Persian expressions shared with the Hindi language (*alfāẓ-i mushtarak-i hindī zabān*), and this is wrong and extremely ugly and causes mockery. (Qatīl 1872, p. 19)

The linguistic declension of Āẕar Baygdilī's geography of the *ʻAjam*,[28] evoked above, is here completed. The third variety of Persian, sort of a supplement to the two *nawʻ*/types of Iran and Turan, is the Persian of Hindustan, to which Qatīl, notably enough, devotes an entire subsection of his book. First of all, Qatīl makes it clear once and for all that those Indians who like himself, being *muqallid*s 'imitators' in the above-delineated meaning, have chosen to adapt to the Iranian standard and enjoy a privileged relationship with the reified category of the 'native speakers', are excluded from the group of the Indian Persian users. Two contrasting forms of Indian Persian are then quickly identified: an artificial, unchanging, book-based language, which is deemed «correct» (it is worth remembering here that the search for the «correctness of language», *ṣiḥḥat-i zabān*, was identified by Qatīl as the pillar for a professional use of Persian) and a live, localized medium, which is, on the contrary, «wrong and ugly». The 'naturality' of this language, directly expressed by Qatīl through the use of the adjective *ṭabʻī*, is further clarified by the adverbial expression *bī-taḥqīq*, which signals the absence of critical reflection and intellectual consciousness, *taḥqīq* having, in the Perso-Arabic traditional sphere of disciplines of knowledge (*ʻulūm*), a well-known technical meaning indicating the 'scrutiny of truth', thus literally 'verification'. The natural, non-negotiated employment of Persian – outside what Antonio Gramsci will call the «conformism» of «non-written normative grammar» (Lo Piparo 1979, p. 250) – by its North Indian users, both in spoken and written form, Qatīl tells us, causes mockery:[29] presumably, the mockery of the native speaker,

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[28]   I deliberately echo here the title of an illuminating essay by Sunil Sharma on the literary «boundaries of ʻAjam» in the early modern period (Sharma 2012).

[29]   To continue with the parallelism with Gramscian linguistic thought, in the same passage evoked above the Italian intellectual talks as well of parody and derision as instruments for ultimately determining a prevalence based on a «grammatical conformism». As Lo Piparo points out, Gramsci is elaborating concepts already expressed by Antoine Meillet and others (Lo Piparo 1979, pp. 250-1).

or, more correctly, of the imagined *model* native speaker and its locally embodied *muqallid/*imitator aliases. Suffice it here to mention, on the one hand, the sarcastic observations on Bīdil's prose attributed by Āzād to ʿAlī Ḥazīn (Āzād 1992, p. 212) and, on the other, the similar dismissive tones used by the late nineteenth century *taẕkira*-writer from Lucknow Āftāb Rāy Lakhnavī when referring to the same author.[30] The main reason for the condemnation of such linguistic practices, so widespread at the end of the eighteenth century to deserve a specific chapter in a general descriptive work on the correct use of Persian language, is identified by Qatīl in its tendency to employ «expressions shared with the Hindi language» (*alfāẓ-i mushtarak-i hindī zabān*). Qatīl's sentence is somehow ambiguous, and one is tempted to think of the influx of Hindi loanwords and go back, for instance, to Ārzū's discussions on the opportunity of using Hindi vocabulary while writing (and talking) in Persian.[31] However, not a single Hindi word can be found in the fourteen-line specimen provided by Qatīl to exemplify the 'natural' Persian of Hindustan. The two specimens, of the 'book' and of the 'natural' Indian Persian, are loosely distinguished by a respectively more formal and more colloquial tone and some variations in the use of Persian vocabulary (cf. Qatīl 1872, pp. 19-20). As a matter of fact, with the expression *alfāẓ-i mushtarak-i hindī zabān* Qatīl seems to be referring not so much to Indo-Aryan loanwords in Persian, but to the use, in Persian, of Persian words as they are used, or would be used, while talking and writing in Hindi/Urdu, and to the acclimatation of Persian in the North Indian linguistic environment.

## 3 Layered hegemonies in the *Nahr al-faṣāḥat*

Such views will be clarified a few years later by Qatīl himself in the *Nahr al-faṣāḥat*, where the peculiarities of the North Indian use will be tackled again, and in much more detail. In the very first chapter, devoted to describing some linguistic practices «that must be abandoned», Qatīl resumes:

> It must be known that the common people of India (*ʿavāmm-i hind*), who do not have a clue how to use Persian, use some expressions which are the cause of mockery among native speakers. (Qatīl 1874a, p. 3)

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**30**   «Although there is still someone, among ignorant Indians, who considers him to be among the most sublime writers, he is absolutely worthless in the opinion of those who really know the Persian language. His Persian, like that of Nāṣir ʿAlī [Sirhindī (d. 1694)], is worse than Hindī» (Āftāb Rāy Lakhnavī 1976-82, 1, p. 123).

**31**   On these and other related aspects of Ārzū's philology, see the ample analysis provided in Persian by Raḥīmpūr 2012 and in English by Dudney 2013.

The statement is followed by a substantial list (almost 50 specimens) of Persian words and expressions used in North India with meanings different from (sometimes in contrast with) those indicated by the same expression in Iran and the literary tradition, and some specific Indian uses. More in detail, the list includes, often with illustrative short sentences, interesting specimens of semantic changes (through processes of narrowing, specialization, metaphorization etc.) such as:[32]

5. North Indian uses (1)

| | |
|---|---|
| *gusistan* | as a synonym of *shikastan* 'to break' (Ir. and lit. 'to destroy'); |
| *durūghgū* | with the meaning of *ja'lī* or *maṣnū'ī* 'fake', 'artificial' (Ir. and lit. 'liar'); |
| *rāstgū* | used to mean *khwush'aṣl* or *garānbahā* 'of pure origin', 'precious' (Ir. and lit. 'truth-teller'); |
| *barf* | to mean *yakh* 'ice', whereas the term indicates 'snow' elsewhere; |
| *farbih* | meaning 'fat' in the other varieties, used as a synonym of *jalī* 'wide' and *gunda* 'thick'; |
| *gazīdan* | (Ir. and lit. 'to bite') to mean *burīdan* 'to cut', and viceversa; |
| *kushtan* | (Ir. and lit. 'to kill') to mean *zadan* 'to hit', and viceversa; |
| *khālū* | to indicate the husband of the maternal aunt (*khāla*). Qatīl stresses that Iranians use the same term to indicate the mother's brother; |
| *īnjānib* | as a substitute of the personal pronoun *man* 'I', whereas, Qatīl informs the reader, the native speakers use the expression to mean *īn ṭaraf* '(in) this direction'; |
| *ḥuqqa* | (originally meaning 'box') instead of *qalyān* 'water pipe'; |
| *dādan* | 'to give' in standard usage, instead of *kashīdan* 'to pull', 'to draw' in some expressions such as *surma dādan* 'to apply antimony' (Ir. *surma kashīdan*); |
| *jastan* | 'to jump' in standard usage, as a substitute of *parīdan* 'to fly', 'to flutter', in some idiomatic expressions such as *jastan-i rukhsāra* (= *parīdan-i rukhsāra*) 'the fading of the colour of the face' or *jastan-i chashm* (= *parīdan-i chashm*) 'the throbbing of the eyelid'; |
| *fishāndan* | (Ir. and lit. 'to scatter') with the meaning of *fahmānīdan* 'to make (sb.) understand'; |
| *nihāda-am* | (Ir. and lit. 'I have put') with the meaning of *nigāh dāshta-am* 'I have kept'; |
| *chasbīdan* | (Ir. and lit. 'to adhere', 'to stick') idiomatically substituting the verbs *rasīdan* 'to come', *guzashtan* 'to pass', *aṣar kardan* 'to make an impression', *nishastan* 'to sit', *farīb shudan* 'to be gulled'. |

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**32**    All the examples described in the following tables are taken from Qatīl 1874a, pp. 3-6.

In other cases, the examples point to Indian innovative uses or original coinages, such as:

6. North Indian uses (2)

|  | Explanatory terms provided by Qatīl |
|---|---|
| *kandīdan* | *kandan* 'to excavate'; |
| *ikhvān ṣāḥib* | *barādar ṣāḥib* 'respectful brother'; |
| *sabzīfurūsh* 'greens-seller' | *bāngfurūsh* 'bang-seller'; |
| *pājāma* | *zīrjāma* 'underwear'; |
| *rawghan-i zard* 'yellow oil' | *rawghan-i gāv-i māda* 'cow oil', i.e. 'butter'; |
| *rawghan-i siyāh* 'black oil' | *rawghan-i chirāgh* 'candle oil'; |
| *āghājī* | *āghājān* 'beloved sir' (also 'grandfather'). |

One particular example, *kustihzan*, used in India, which according to Qatīl means *kusdihzan* (an abusive word literally indicating a man 'whose wife gives away her pussy'), signals as well the presence, in Indian Persian, of changes affecting consonantal features, in this case the shift from the voiced to the voiceless dental plosive /d/>/t/. Most notably, some of the examples provided by Qatīl show an influence (varying in degree from probable to obvious) of the North Indian vernacular milieu, not only through a direct influx of lexical material (cf. the above mentioned *āghājī*, a Persian-Hindi compound formed by P. *āghā* 'sir' + H. term of respect *jī*) but also through semantic and morpho-syntactical calques, as in the following cases:

7. North Indian uses (3)

| *sukhan* | (Ir. and lit. 'word', 'speech') to indicate an action (*fiʻl va ḥarakat*). Qatīl provides the following examples: Iranian Persian *pisar-i āghā taqī harrūz dar bayt al-luṭf mīravad u īn ḥarakāt munāsib-i ḥāl-i ū nīst/* Indian Persian *pisar-i āghā payvasta harrūz dar bayt al-luṭf mīravad u īn sukhanān munāsib-i ḥāl-i ū nīst* 'The son of Āqā Taqī goes everyday to the brothel and his actions/behaviours are not appropriate to his status' > cf. the use of H. *bāt* 'discourse', 'circumstance', 'question', etc.; |
|---|---|
| *az* | (Ir. and lit. 'from') instead of *bā* (Ir. and lit. 'with'). The examples given are*: fulān-ī az fulān-ī dushman-ast* 'some person is the enemy of some other person'; *az ū guftam* 'I told him'; *nān az murabbā-yi sīb khwurdam* 'I ate bread with apple jam') > cf. the use of H. *sē* 'from', 'with'; |
| *kasī chīz* | corresponding to Ir. *hīch chīz* 'nothing'. He also mentions the expressions *kasī vajh, kasī vujūh-ī* 'in no way' (personal pronoun *kasī* 'someone' used as a negative indefinite adjective) > cf. the use of H. pronoun *kōī-kisī* 'some(one)', any(one)'; |
| *fardā* | (Ir. and lit. 'tomorrow') and *pasfardā* (Ir. and lit. 'the day after tomorrow') to mean *dīrūz* 'yesterday' and *parīrūz* 'the day after tomorrow' and viceversa > cf. the use of H. *kal* 'yesterday', 'tomorrow' and *parsom* 'the day before yesterday', 'the day after tomorrow'; |

| | |
|---|---|
| *ki* | (Ir. and lit. 'who?') used instead of *chi* 'what?'. As an example, Qatīl provides the sentence *barāy-i ki kār mīravīd* 'to what occupation are you going?' > cf. the use of H. *kaun* 'who', 'which', 'what'; |
| *kudām* | (Ir. and lit. 'which?') instead of *ki* 'who?'. Qatīl provides the illustrative sentence *īn kudām-ast* «who is this?» > cf. H. *kaun* 'who; which; what'; |
| *nūshīdan* | 'to drink' in literary usage, instead of *kashīdan* 'to pull; to draw' to express the idea of inhaling smoke > cf. the use of H. *pīna* 'to drink'. |
| Third person plural | Qatīl mentions the use of the third person plural instead of the second person plural in verb conjugation. As an example Qatīl provides the following sentence: *shumā kujā rafta būdand va khwāhand raft* 'where had you gone and will go?' > cf. the use of H. honorific *āp* 'you' + plural verb; |
| Suffix *-yā* | Qatīl mentions the use of the final *yā* to produce feminine nouns: *ṣāḥibzādī* 'daughter of a notable' < *ṣāḥibzāda* 'son/daughter of a notable', *nūr-e chashmī* 'light of the eyes' (standard *nūr-i chashm*) according to Qatīl «applied only to daughters and not to sons» > cf. the use of H. feminine ending *-ī*. |

These testimonies are flanked by observations that show Qatīl's interest in reconstructing precise attributions of geographical appurtenance for Persian expressions commonly used in Hindustan: for instance, we are told that the term *bādfurūsh* 'idle talker', commonly substituted in Iran with the synonym *bādkhwān* and considered by some critics to be an Indian coinage, is actually a Central Asian term used by the Tajik poet Abū Naṣr Badakhshānī, who, Qatīl emphasises, never set foot in India. More in general, Qatīl's examples confirm that the objects of his discussion are not at all the more or less simplified lower forms of non-standard speech such as those attributed, for instance, to Baba Nanak (Shackle 1978; Orsini, Pellò unpublished), nor is the main problem the lexical influx of Hindi (which, on the contrary, is indeed pragmatically accepted by Qatīl as a logical fact when he comes to talk about Indian realities: Qatīl 1874a, p. 43), but rather a recognizable, shared and very diffused alternative standard of Persian, so important as to be considered as the third main variety of the entire geography of Persian, following the Iranian and the Turanian. Qatīl is interested in describing and criticizing the every-day Persian linguistic practices of the bilingual Hindustani *munshī*s, perceived as 'low' by him, but constituting as well his own socio-linguistic background and surroundings: as we shall verify further on as well, Qatīl's is the critical view of a purist consciously coming from an insider, a view which, significantly, gives the Hindustani variety an official space of recognition and an invaluable comparative recording while at the very same time officially dismissing it.[33] As a matter of fact, in the *Nahr al-faṣāḥat* Qatīl enlarges his critical

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[33] The following passage from the *Chār sharbat* is emblematic in exemplifying Qatīl's attitude towards purism: «You should have a look at their [Indian writers'] books: they have mixed together Arabic, Persian, Greek (*yūnānī*), Siriac (*sūryānī*), English (*angrezī*), Purābī and Panjabi, and have imagined that this is the language used by the people of Iran (*ahl-i*

survey of the internal linguistic hierarchies of the *'Ajam*, extending the comparative discussion to Iranian Persian. At the very beginning of the eight chapter, specifically devoted to the Persian language, Qatīl writes:

> I would say that for the imitator (*muqallid*) of poetry both the Persian of Iran and that of Turan would work. But the language of the Azerbaijanis is better than that of the Turanians, and the people of Khorasan are better than those from Azerbaijan. Shirazis are better than Khorasanis and Isfahanis are better than anyone. (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 41-42)

Qatīl's rankings according to prestige would thus see the former Safavid capital Isfahan as the most authoritative centre,[34] followed, in order of importance, by Shiraz, Khorasan, Azerbaijan and Turan (where Kabul dominates over Balkh, as we have seen above). The following statements, however, further complicate the issue. First of all, Qatīl's analysis points to the recognition of a situation of diglossia within the world of Persian:

> People from the higher and lower classes (*ashrāf va ajlāf*), from the mountains and from the cities, are all masters of the language (*ṣāḥibzabān*). When it comes to speaking, a servant is equal to Mīrzā Ṣā'ib, and the language of both is authoritative. (Qatīl 1874a, p. 42)

Contrary to the Indian situation, where the 'natural Persian' of the local *munshī*s must be abandoned as the lowest possible variety, the 'natural Persian' of the speakers from Iran must be regarded as a source of imitation, irrespective of the social provenance of the source. However, the social equality of the Iranians, when it comes to spoken practices, and the authority that must be attributed to them and to the (new) Iranian standard, does not necessarily mean a blind endorsement of all the linguistic material coming from Iran:

> However, some native speakers (*ahl-i zabān*), cannot pronounce some sounds correctly, just like the Indians. Actually, in every social group (*firqa*) and category (*ṣinf*) one can find people who cannot spell some

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*Īrān*)» (Qatīl 1845, p. 43). While dismissing the local Hindustani usage, he is at the very same time showing off his unique conoisseurship as a Hindustani insider.

**34** Connecting such statements with the authoritative and persistent Arabic linguistic tradition in the Indo-Persian scholar's background, it is worth highlighting here that the discussions on the 'best variety' of Arabic go as far back as Ibn Jinnī and Ibn Fāris (tenth century), for whom the Quraysh are *afṣaḥu 'l-'arabi alsinatan wa aṣfāhum lughatan* «the best Arabic speakers as far as language is concerned, and with the purest dialect»; on the contrary Sībawayhi (8th c.), the author of the first Arabic grammar known to us, discusses the dialects of Arabic at length but shows no preference for this or that variety (Levin 1994, p. 215; see also Larcher 2004).

letters the correct way: some people cannot pronounce the *rā*, and others the *qāf*, and so on. In this case, the articulation of the word, even if it comes from a native speaker, is wrong (*ghalaṭ*), for instance *khalṭūm* instead of *kharṭūm* 'proboscis', *dīfār* instead of *dīvār* 'wall', *kāy u bāy* instead of *kār u bār* 'affairs' [...]. One can also find mistakes in meter and rhyme among the poets of Iran, who in this case are not reliable. (Qatīl 1874a, p. 42)

A critic looking for *faṣāḥat*, a 'clarity of expression' identified here in a fluent, non-artefact, non-anachronistic Persian language located on a circumscribed Iranian plateau and especially in its (now only symbolic) capital city, should also be able to criticize Iranian speakers and writers, be it for their innate or regional allophonic pronounciation, or for the technical flaws found in the true locus of linguistic institutionalization in the Persianate domain, i.e. the realm of poetry. Within such boundaries, and most notably within the boundaries of Iran, linguistic change and creativity is, nonetheless, envisaged and regulated:

The intervention (*taṣarruf*) introduced by them, i.e. to shape Arabic words into Persian forms and vice-versa, is correct, like *ṭalabīdan* 'to seek', *fahmīdan* 'to understand', *balʿīdan* 'to swallow' in the first case and *muzlaf* 'curly haired', *muzayyab* 'adorned', *nizākat* 'tenderness' in the second. Even if it is structurally wrong, a word is also to be accepted if it has been used by four very authoritative poets, or if ten good poets from Iran agree to it, or if its pronounciation is generally accepted. (Qatīl 1874a, p. 42)

A few years before, in the final part of the *Shajarat al-amānī*, Qatīl had dealt with the subject (the interventions and innovations applied to the Arabic lexical heritage and its use) with a less indulgent attitude, numbering them among the flaws of *faṣāḥat*, as being against the rules of *qiyās-i lughavī*, i.e. the linguistic paradigms of the (Arabic) grammatical tradition.[35] Here, on the authority of great «Iranian» masters of the past such as, for instance, Khāqānī (who operated in an interacting twelfth century Georgian-Byzantine-Seljuq Subcaucasian milieu), he accepts the very same usages as correct (*ṣaḥīḥ*): namely, constructing Persian verbs out of Arabic verbal nouns such as *ṭalabīdan* 'to seek' < A. *ṭalab* 'quest' + P. infinitive suffix *-īdan*, or shaping Arabic-like forms such as *nizākat* 'tenderness' by extracting triliteral roots from Persian words (in this specific case, the adjective *nāzuk* 'delicate, subtle') or attaching the Arabic article *al-* to Persian

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**35**    See Qatīl 1872, pp. 20-21. Among the flaws contradicting the *qiyās-i lughavī* Qatīl enumerates as well some local uses of verbal forms (i.e. *gashtānīdan* instead of *gardānīdan* 'to avert') in Kabuli Persian 'and by some Khorasanians' (Qatīl 1872, pp. 20-21).

words in Arabic-Persian state-constructs such as *ẕū 'l-khwarshīdayn* 'the owner of the two suns', where the Arabic dual oblique suffix *-ayn* is also applied to the word of Iranian stock *khwarshīd* 'sun', etc. (Qatīl 1874a, p. 22). This is not at all a new discussion, having already been tackled, for instance, as far as the Indo-Persian context is concerned, in the widespread Mughal grammar by ‘Abd al-Vāsi‘ Hānsavī[36] and in the philological works by Ārzū.[37] Qatīl, who is crafting a negotiated discourse on purism, is mainly interested in distinguishing who has the linguistic right of intervention and in what domains such rights might be applied. Place, time, and modalities of change and legitimization are made very clear in the ninth chapter, devoted to «the difference between the poetry of the ancients and the moderns, and the prose of the Indians and of the native speakers»:

> The intelligent reader should know that the current linguistic usage (*rūzmarra*) of Iran changes every sixty years, and in every period sixty eloquent men gather together and apply new changes. Thus, the poetry which is composed according to the usage of the time, is not in the language of the ancients. The usage of the time consists of what the people of Iran employ when speaking [...]. In this respect, it is useless to consult the books; as for the Persian of Turan, it does not change, since the Turanians are not the owners of the language (*mālik-i īn zabān nabāshand*) and among them you will not find men eloquent in Persian (*fuṣaḥā-yi fārsī*), except in poetry. (Qatīl 1874a, p. 42)

The rapid linguistic change and the related imaginary hyper-*majlis* of the ‘Acádemie’ of the Persian language, which takes place every sixty years in Iran, Qatīl suggests here, is what really marks the difference between the Iranian region and the rest of the Persophonie. Turan, imagined as the crystallized space of the great masters of the Central Asian past, is not where the «owners of the language» reside, since its language, contrastingly represented as immobile in an anachronistic archaicity, does not change. There is no usage of the time beyond the Iranian usage: being eloquent in Persian, consequently, means being able to adapt to the rapid linguistic change taking place in post-Safavid Iran. It is crucial to highlight

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36   For ‘Abd al-Vāsī’ such linguistic facts are merely the object of a normative and performative description based on a perceived inclusive lay of the land: word production and linguistic innovations in Persian include for him, with no interruption and no identification of hierarchical actors, the Hindi as much as the Arabic influx, as exemplified by the juxtaposition of the Hindi-Persian form *chalīdan* 'to walk' to the parallel Arabic-Persian *ṭalabīdan* seen above etc. (Hānsavī 1884, pp. 39-40).

37   Ārzū's articulate treatment of the question in his *Muṣmir* includes dedicated discussions on Persianization (*tafrīs*) and Arabization (*ta‘rīb*) as well as the legitimacy, for Indian literati, of making interventions in Persian (e.g. Ārzū 1991, pp. 161-175; 36-39; discussions in Pellò 2004 and Dudney 2013, pp. 113-118).

that Qatīl is not celebrating here the literary Persian of the ancient masters, nor indeed is he proposing any sort of *bāzgasht* or linguistic neo-classicism based on the projection of a localized 'glorious' past (the Khorasan of Samanid and Ghaznavid times); on the contrary, he is institutionalizing, from the dislocation of Shi'ite Awadh, a reconstructed present, founded on a new canonization of the current linguistic situation. To draw a parallel with Islamic (and especially Shi'ite) jurisprudence – which is, in fact, closely related to grammatical and rhetorical knowledge in the Arabic-Islamic tradition[38] – one could say that, for Qatīl, the door of linguistic *ijtihād* (the effort toward normative elaboration based on scriptural sources) is not at all closed. In the context of a virtual collective *majlis* where, as we have already observed, the Indian learners are called, using a technical term of Shi'ite *fiqh*, *muqallid* ('imitators', i.e. applying the principle of *taqlīd* 'imitation' of a juridical authority), the authoritative (Iranian) poets work like *mujtahid*s, and the most authoritative among them function as sources of imitation (the idea of the *marja'-i taqlīd* will be institutionalized during the nineteenth century); or, alternatively, the 'general acceptance', again comparable to the legal principle of *ijmā'*, works as a normative rule to approve innovations and changes.

After having described some further peculiarities of Iranian Persian and having noticed that Iranians themselves use Hindi words if they have come to India (Qatīl 1874a, p. 43), Qatīl will conclude his discussion on the varieties of Persian in the second part of the tenth chapter, devoted, as we have already mentioned, to teaching how to write *inshā* prose. In line with the practical aim of the chapter, Qatīl articulates his concluding remarks while providing a pragmatic accommodation of the complex hierarchies described above, where the place of his native Hindustan, and especially of his own socio-professional background, is ultimately rescued through a stylistic categorization:

> Prose can be either devoid of affectation or endowed with it. The one devoid of affectation can be of two kinds: that according to the native speakers, which is of course more elegant and elevated – but what can we do about that?, it is not commonly used (*ravāj nadārad*) in India and our *munshī*s (*munshiyān-i īnjā*), because of their ignorance of those idioms, even consider it of little value (*pūch shumārand*) and have no understanding of it. Or it can be according to the people of India, and when we talk of the peculiarities of the people of India, we do not so much refer to the wrong or un-idiomatic expressions (*'ibārāt-i ghalaṭ u bī-muḥāvara*), but mainly to the absence of discernment as far as the

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38    Ṣābit ibn Qurra (ninth century) literally categorized *fiqh* as a branch of rhetoric (Walzer 1953, p. 128). On the openly-recognized interdependence of their disciplines by grammarians and lawyers from the end of the 8th century onwards, see Carter 1983.

Persian of Iran and Turan is concerned. Because Indians employed what they found in the books. (Qatīl 1874a, p. 44)

Whereas, when it comes to speech and conversation, a contained and centralized idea of Iran is for Qatīl the only plausible model to refer to, and, as far as poetry is concerned, a pale archaization of Central Asian/Afghan 'Turan' can still be contemplated, when *inshā* prose – the true subject of Qatīl's treatise – is finally tackled directly, Hindustan is notably the only other stylistic space to obtain Qatīl's quality certification as *bī-takalluf*, 'without affectation', albeit declaredly as a second choice following Iran. What distinguishes an acceptable Hindustani practice is the very same feature that marks its limits – i.e. the lack of a clear choice between Iran and Central Asia. For Qatīl, in other words, keeping in mind what he had said about the exclusion of Hindustani peculiarities, Indian Persian can either be 'natural' (*ṭabʻī*) but ugly and incorrect, or correct but bookish and detached from current standards, seen as prestigious. The reasons for such a situation are not only attributable to the inclination to rigidly adhere to the internal rhetorical requirements of poetry and prose (Qatīl 1874a, p. 44) but, more decisively, are social and historical as well:

> [Because of] living outside the city or in the mountains or because of the admixture with the Turks or living in a town where Iranians and Turanians are mixed or choosing the service of the sultan of Turkestan and imitating their current usage […], [Indian writers] have not distinguished between Iran and Turan and an artificial and non-artificial language. (Qatīl 1874a, p. 44)

Isolation and detachment from the metropolis, or, alternatively and complementarily, admixture with Central Asians in the metropolis, place the Indian writer in a limbo, suspended between the new, recast Iranian standard and the archaic, immobile Turani model. The exclusion of the Central Asian varieties is articulated through their identification with the Turks and Turkestan, notwithstanding the Turkization of the Iranian Persian lexicon shown by Qatīl himself in his examples. India, for its part, is seen as the place of admixture, indetermination, and possibility of choice and, ultimately, accommodation:

> Since the death of Ẓahīr al-Dīn Bābur and during the rule of the Mughals (*salṭanat-i Gūrkāniya*), and up to the present days in which the moon of this state is undergoing an eclipse, because of the bad nature and the black heart of the servants of this court […] so many Iranians and Turanians came to Hindustan that the people residing in this country have lost the ability to distinguish between the Iranian and Turanian Persian, apart from those good-natured who can separate pure wine

from dregs. The writer of the current usage, then, must find fluency in the phrasing, and after having studied the Persian of Iran from the native speakers or from a proficient knower of the language, can use in his letters (*makātīb*) the standard which has become widespread in India – *people talk in the capacity of their intellects* – and use the standard of Iran if the interlocutor is a proficient knower of the language or a native speaker. To exemplify this subject, I shall write here two letters, following respectively the style (*bar vaẓ'*) of the Iranians and that of the Indians, both being in a good and agile current language (*muḥāvara*). (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 45-46)

The duty of the professional Indian *munshī* (personified in the text by Qatīl himself through the evocation of the «knower of the language» as the alternative authority to an Iranian speaker) is, thus, that of distinguishing among varieties and choosing the right register in view of the various typologies of interlocutors and spaces of linguistic articulation: the Hindustani philologist-secretary, Qatīl implicitly suggests, has the unique advantage of being able to commute easily between the two poles of Iranian and Hindustani varieties (perfectly translatable at this point as styles of expression), retaining in both cases the hegemony of a symbolic power identified here with the good taste of selecting an agile up-to-date standard.

## 4 Qatīl's conversion and the linguistic idea of Iran

In a thoughtful and brilliantly documented article in Persian entitled «When did Persian become the colloquial language of Isfahan?», Habib Borjian has suggested that the predication of Shi'ism during the Safavid times, both in urban and in rural centers, is to be considered a key factor in the rapid regression of central Iranian dialects and their eventual virtual disappearance in favor of modern spoken Persian (Burjiyān 2013, pp. 105; 107). According to the Iranian linguist, the widespread diffusion of the public practice of *rawẓakhwānī*[39] gatherings during the sixteenth and seventeenth century process of religious uniformity of Iran helps, among other things, to explain the fact that «in the main cities of the central regions, such as Isfahan, Kashan and Yazd, the local dialects (*gūyishhā-yi*

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39 The *rawẓakhwānī* is a public ritual during which a trained speaker retells mourning narratives from the battle of Karbalā, basing the narrative plot on texts such as the eponym *Rawẓat al-shuhadā* 'Garden of Martyrs' by Vā'iẓ-i Kāshifī (1502) but with a preponderance of improvisation and adaptation to the local audience. Some recent observations on this and other connected practices are found in Aghaie 2015, pp. 12-13, who also emphasizes their diffusion from the sixteenth century onwards.

*būmī*) have survived only among the Jewish and Zoroastrian residents, while Muslims use exclusively Persian» (Burjiyān 2013, p. 107). As a matter of fact, instances of the capillary use of a sort of Iranian *koine*, seen as departing from the cosmopolitan literary language, can be found in the religious literature of the Safavid times, as in the cases of the well-known Persian Qur'anic commentary *Minhāj al-ṣādiqīn* by Fatḥ Allāh Kāshānī (1570-1) (Muṭahharī 1980, p. 61). Along similar lines, Shaykh Bahā al-Dīn 'Āmilī (1547-1621), the influent Lebanese scholar and *shaykh al-islām* of Isfahan during the time of Shāh 'Abbās, directly deals with the same linguistic issues in his *Jāmi'-i 'Abbāsī*, the first comprehensive work on jurisprudence in Persian. While explaining in the introduction the reasons for his choice of language, 'Āmilī writes:

> In accordance with the noblest and most excellent command, this work and its contents were compiled and presented to the reader in clear and comprehensible idioms, so that everyone, from both the notables and the common people (*khavāṣṣ va 'avāmm*), might find and gain advantage from reading it. ('Āmilī n.d., 2-3)

'Āmilī's programmatic statements find further pragmatic confirmation in the popularization, for the same preaching reasons, of literary works such as the *Rawẓat al-shuhadā*, re-told and explained in a simplified language in public settings (Aghaie 2015, pp. 12-13). Such linguistic trajectoires, conjuring up the pedagogical observations made by Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672-1750) on the role of the *predicatore urbano* (urban preacher) and the diffusion of an «easy and propotionate» *comun parlare italiano* (common Italian speech) in the comparable multilingual milieu of post counter-reformation Italy (Formigari 1990, pp. 81-84),[40] are not without echoes in Qatīl's work. Writing from his North Indian observation point almost two centuries after 'Āmilī's Persianization of the Shi'ite traditions, Qatīl is reacting to a transformed linguistic situation well-described, again, by Borjian:

> at least from Qajar times, the language of peddlers and preachers has been a reformed kind of literary language, and in the theological school only this language was used in teaching. [...] It is possible that [this situation] was the main reason for the progress of Persian in all the Iranian cities, starting from Shiraz, where literary Persian (*fārsī-yi darī*) took the place of the local variety (*fārsī-yi būmī-ash*). In the same way, Turkish took the place of Tati in Azerbaijan. (Burjiyān 2013, p. 107)

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**40**  Muratori deals with such themes in two very influential works: *Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto* (Considerations on Good Taste) and *Pregi dell'eloquenza popolare* (Virtues of Folk Eloquence). On the subject see, also, D'Agostino 1989.

To put it in Gramscian terms, then, if «every hegemonic relation is necessarily a pedagogical relation»[41], in a Lucknow declared *Dār al-shīʿa* during the reign of Āṣaf al-Dawla (1775-1797) and traversed by the intellectual discourse of Shiʿite scholars and travellers from the nascent Qajar state, Qatīl's linguistic education can be said to respond, by re-thinking the position of the Indian *munshī*, to the formation of a new Iranian *koine*[42] and the socio-textual role of the 'fresh Persian speakers' (*fārsīgūyān-i tāza*) already perceived as crucial, for instance, by Ānand Rām Mukhliṣ in his lexicographic *Mirʾāt al-iṣṭilāḥ*.[43] In this setting, Qatīl's relationship with Shiʿism and his superimposition of the latter on his idea of Iran play a significant role in the construction of his linguistic hierarchies and boundaries. The phraseology chosen by Qatīl to exemplify his grammatical teachings may serve as a preliminary illustration of this point. As a matter of fact, not only do we meet with openly stated indications of hierarchical superiority, such as in the sentence *Īrān-i mā bih az Tūrān-i shumā* 'Our Iran is better than your Turan' (Qatīl 1872, p. 14), but we also find a whole set of linguistic items and idioms which are identified and catalogued by Qatīl as examples of Iranian Persian and which actually refer directly to a Shiʿite religious and devotional sphere. The very rich first part of the second section of the *Chār sharbat* (Qatīl 1845, pp. 27-36), devoted to the «expressions of the native speakers» (*muṣṭalaḥāt-i ahl-i zabān*), includes several such examples. Among the usual obscene repertoire representing the language of the *ʿavāmm*, such as *jighla* defined as a «boy who is worth being fucked» (Qatīl 1845, p. 33), terms referring to specific places in Iran, such as the *bāgh-i naẓar* of Kerman (Qatīl 1845, p. 30), technical terms of the traditional *kushti* wrestling in the everyday life of the *vilāyat* (Qatīl 1845, pp. 30-31), etc., we find several instances of Shiʿite socio-religious vocabulary identified as Iranian: for instance, *ithnāʿasharī* 'Twelver (Shiʿite)', *jaʿfarī* 'following the Shiʿite juridical school', *marṣiya* 'elegy (for the Imam)', *nawḥa* 'lament for Karbala's martyrs', *rawẓakhwān* explained by Qatīl as «the reader of the Muḥarram books», *pāʿalamkhwān* explained as «the person who sings under the banner of the Imam during Muḥarram», *pāminbarī* explained as «the person who sits under the pulpit during the sermon»,

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**41**   «Ogni rapporto di egemonia è necessariamente un rapporto pedagogico», the Sardinian thinker writes in the *Quaderno* 10 (Gramsci 1975, 2, p. 1331).

**42**   I am referring again to Gramsci's approach to the term, on which the discussion by Lo Piparo is, once more, illuminating (Lo Piparo 1979, p. 262).

**43**   Closely connected to the stylistic and socio-textual phenomenon of *tāzagūyī* 'new diction', Mukhliṣ declares that he uses this term to indicate the users of a contemporary diction as opposed to the «old» forms found in traditional lexicography. In Mukhliṣ's words, his aim is very different from that of the «lexicographers who have focused on the collection of old words (*lughāt-i qadīm*) and have not paid attention to the study (*taḥqīq*) of the expressions of the fresh Persian speakers (*fārsīgūyān-i tāza*)» (Mukhliṣ 2013, 1, p. 2).

*ẕākir* 'the declaimer of deeds of the imam', *gunbad-i mubārak* explained as «the mausoleum of the Imam» (lit. 'blessed dome'), *khāk-i shifā* explained as «the ground of Karbalā» (lit. 'ground of well-being'), *ṣāḥib al-zamān* explained as «Imam Mahdi» (lit. 'Master of time'), and so on (Qatīl 1845, pp. 32-34). In some cases, Qatīl's observations reproduce indeed a sort of linguistic ethnography of early Qajar Iran, as in the description of *bijūsh* (sing. imp. of verb *jushīdan* lit. 'to boil') technically used in the context of a Muḥarram procession with the exhortative meaning of 'be passionate!', let's strive hard!':

> it is the exclamation (*naʻra*) of the Twelvers (*ithnāʻashariyān*) when they beat their chest (*sīnazanī*), addressing those who have got tired [of mourning]. When the latter listen to these calls, they begin again to commit to their devotional duties. (Qatīl 1845, p. 35)

Against the same background, to add a further example, the emerging and polysemic Iranian urban social figure of the *lūṭī*s (which might be rendered here, very generally, as 'street people')[44] is connected in the text to a specific Iranian linguistic usage related to the performing space of the Muḥarram processions. While defining the technical use of the word *sang* 'stone', Qatīl writes:

> In the jargon of the *lūṭī*s, it means *chakchakī*. It is that thing which is made of wood and which they beat in front of the *ʻalam*s of the *īmām* during *muḥarram* and when they beat them they recite lines, but now the beating of *sang* is very widespread and both humble and noble ones beat the *sang*, with the only exception of the rulers and the dignitaries (*ṣāḥib-i tamkīn u vaqār*), in Iran as well as in Hindustan. (Qatīl 1845, p. 35)

A slang use of the term *sang* in a non-privileged social context becomes an instrument, in Qatīl's programmatical normative work, to promote the institutionalization of a new idea of Iran as well as to highlight the spread of a unifying Shi'ite devotional practice between the two poles of Qatīl's world of Persian. Several other examples of the frequent normative use of words, idioms and expressions related to the Shi'ite religiolect can be found in all of Qatīl's works, from the *Shajarat al-amānī*, where a Shi'ite-Sunni terminological diatribe is used to explain the rhetorical figure called *īhām* 'anphibology' (Qatīl 1872, p. 23), to the *Nahr al-faṣāḥat*, where various invocations to the Imams are used to illustrate the prestigious linguistic practice of a 'model' Persian (Qatīl 1874a, pp. 34, 63). In Qatīl's letters,

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**44**   On the *luṭī*s and their perceived image as a more or less organized guild ranging, with various degrees of overlappings, from street performers to romantic outlaws, see Floor 1971 and 2010.

among personal observations on how difficult it is to use spoken Persian and the choice of the best regional variety (Qatīl 1887, pp. 72-73), an exhortation to his younger friends to take advantage of the invaluable occasion to practice the language with native speakers from the *vilāyat* (Qatīl 1887, p. 69), and philological criticism directed towards himself as well as towards the «eloquent masters of Iran and Purab» who «also make mistakes» (Qatīl 1887, p. 72), we run into various situations related to a specific Iranian-Shi'ite linguistic and textual culture. An interesting case, beyond the numerous references to the Imams, the Shi'ite sacred places of Western Asia and the associated pilgrimages (Qatīl 1887, pp. 8, 14, 29, 52, 84, etc.), consists of the mention, among the books that Qatīl tells his interlocutors to have ordered from Iran for his own library in Lucknow (lamenting their high price), of some *kitābhā-yi imāmiya* 'Imamite books', among which he cites the *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn*, the collection of traditions by Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (1616-1698) and a Persian translation of Muḥaqqiq-i Ḥillī's (1205-1267) legal compendium *Sharā'i' al-Islām* (Qatīl 1887, p. 61).[45]

A direct connection between Qatīl's conversion, Iran, and his linguistic choices is, after all, often made by *taẕkira* literature itself.[46] Ghulām Hamadānī Muṣḥafī states:

> The name of [Qatīl's] father was Dargāhī and he himself, then, was known as Dīvālī Singh.[47] When, according to the decree of fate, his parents moved to Fayẕābād, he honoured himself by converting to Islam thanks to Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Shahīd Iṣfahāni. He was eighteen years old [...]. Since at the time of the late ruler there were more Iranians than now, he chose this path [the Shī'ī *maẕhab*] and his master bestowed upon him the *takhalluṣ* 'Qatīl': the master's name was Shahīd [i.e. 'martyr'], so the disciple had to be known as Qatīl [i.e. 'slain']. (Muṣḥafī 1934, p. 46)

According to Muṣḥafī, the young poet's conversion takes place primarily through the encounter with his *ustād* in Persian poetry: in the textualized

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**45**   A Safavid copy of Rūmī's *maṣnavī*, on plain paper and with normal calligraphy would cost, according to an annoyed Qatīl, «sixty, seventy, eighty» rupees, whereas «at the time of Sulṭān Ḥusayn, the last Safavid ruler [...] nobody would have bothered to buy it, since even one rupee would have been a high price for it» (Qatīl 1887, p. 61).

**46**   I provide a richer anthology in Pellò (2012, pp. 161-8); the following notes are partially based on the material discussed there.

**47**   *Sic* in the 1934 printed edition of Muṣḥafī's text. Muḥammad 'Umar's Urdu translation of the *Haft tamāshā* has the form Dīvānī Singh (Qatīl 1968), which is found also in Alam and Subrahmanyam (2012, pp. 423-426; transcribed as Diwani Singh). Other sources, such as Anūsha (1996-2001, 3, 2032-2034), state that Qatīl's name previous to conversion was Dīvālī Singh.

dimension of Qatīl's literary figure, the bestowing of his poetical *takhalluṣ* indicates at the same time his new identity as a Persian writer and his new identity as a Shi'ite faithful,[48] both mediated by the dominant presence of Iranians in Awadh. Developing this motif, by mid nineteenth century Najm-i Ṭabāṭabā'ī will write, in his *taẕkira Naghma-yi 'andalīb* (1845):

> When Muḥammad Bāqir decided to go back to his native country, the youth felt the desire to go with him. He thus visited Iran, and learnt the language of the people there, with a great passion. He was not even seventeen when he accepted Islam and declared his own conversion. When he came back from Iran his father was still alive, but he abandoned his household to follow his love for Twelver Shi'ite Islam. (Najm-i Ṭabāṭabā'ī MS, f. 149*v*)

An identification of linguistic Persianization with religious conversion is delineated, the critical point being Qatīl's learning of the prestigious Iranian variety during what is depicted in the text as a revealing study-pilgrimage to the *vilāyat*. The conversion and his trip to Iran to learn the language – the latter is a leading *topos* also in the biographies of other Indo-Persian writers of scribal background such as his ancestor Siyālkotī Mal Vārasta and Tek Chand Bahār[49] – are indeed the main axes along which Qatīl is read during the nineteenth century: similar statements can be found in several other Indo-Persian texts looking at Iran through the mirror of the Qajar state, for instance in the *Khāzin al-shu'arā* – completed in 1848, at the onset of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh's reign – where the core of the biographical entry devoted to Qatīl again makes a close connection between his abandoning of the 'deep darkness of infidelity' and his learning, while in the *vilāyat*, of the local variety of Persian (Mīrānjān Ajmalī MS, f. 123*r*). Writing at the end of the 1930s, Sayyid 'Alī Anvarī Farīdābādī shows quite clearly the persistence of such readings: «He converted to Islam because he was passionately in love with the Persian language, choosing for this very reason the way of the Shī'a» (Anvarī Farīdābādī 1939, p. 119). Beyond the trope of Qatīl's linguistic conversion, and against the background of a rapid process of nationalization of the linguistic-literary traditions, it is worth remembering, in conclusion, that Qatīl's tendency towards purism, centralization and hierarchization is not limited to Persian and Iran, but applies to all the cultural-linguistic domains he deals with, beginninig with the Hindi-Urdu and including the Turkish sphere as well:

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48    For other 'literary' conversions in the same environment, see Pellò 2015.

49    On these probably fictional trips, whose symbolic value should not in any case be overlooked, see, respectively, the articulate comments by Shamīsā in Vārasta 2001, pp. 32-33 and the note by Dizfūliyān, who mentions the *taẕkira Gulzār-i Ibrāhīm* as a source, in Bahār 2001-2002, *chahārdah*.

consider, for instance, the introductory discussions on the absolute linguistic dominance of the varieties used in the «capitals» (*qarārgāh-i arkān-i dawlat-i pādshāhī*) of *Rūm*, *Īrān* and *Hindūstān*, identified respectively in Istanbul (some European grammars would support the same opinion ca. twenty years later[50]), Isfahan and Shāhjahānābād in the *Daryā-yi laṭāfat* (Inshā 1916, p. 1); or the systematic attitude, in the *Haft tamāshā*, towards correcting the wrong pronunciation, by people from Iran, of Hindi terms containing specific sounds like the aspirate and the retroflex consonants, which «don't come out clear […] from the Iranians» and which are, in the second case, exclusive to the «Afghans, the English and the Indians» (Qatīl 1875, pp. 6, 8). In a late eighteenth and early nineteenth century world of connected philologies and competing educational systems,[51] Qatīl's 'official' discourse on language from the state of Awadh – more or less contemporary to the abbé Gregoire's declarations on the abolition of patoises and the linguistic unification of France[52] – reconstructs an organic and hierarchicized space of centralized *langues* and varieties, dominated by the search for *faṣāḥat*, 'eloquent clarity' but also the capacity to be adequate to the context: every attempt on the part of Indians to forcibly look Iranian (*tamaghghul*) is, one should bear in mind, judged very negatively by the

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50    Observations on the 'superiority' of the variety of Costantinople can be found in the *Grammaire théorique et pratique de la langue turke* by Artin Hindoglu (Paris, 1834; the text is a translation from a previous German version dated 1829) and in the older *Éléments de la grammaire turke* by Amédée Jaubert (1823), where the author writes: «Il seroit absurde de supposer qu'une langue répandue sur un aussi grand espace, n'éprouvât pas, selon la diversités des lieux, de nombreuses variations d'idiomes; aussi le turk qu'on parle dans la Romélie, par exemple, diffère beaucoup de celui de la Natolie, et sur-tout du turk parlé dans les pays qu'arrose l'Halys, dans ceux que traverse l'Araxe, et dans les lieux où l'Euphrate et le Tigre prennent leur source: néanmoins, nous pouvons affirmer, d'après notre propre expérience, que cette différence n'est pas comparable à celle qui existe les dialectes du français dans quelques-unes de nos provinces. Il faut observer, d'ailleurs, qu'en Turquie, comme par-tout où des conquérans pei éclairés ont porté leurs mœurs et leurs lois, la langue primitive des habitans ne s'est point perdue. Ainsi le peuple parle l'arabe à Alger, à Tunis, en Égypte et en Syrie; divers dialectes du slave en Bosnie, en Illyrie, en Servie, en Bulgarie; le valaque au-delà du Danube; le grec en Morée, dans l'Archipel, à Constantinople et à Smyrne; enfin l'arménien et le kurde en Asie: et néanmoins, dams toutes ces contrées, on ne rencontre pas un homme tant soit peu instruit, qui n'entende et ne parle le turk. *Mais c'est à Constantinople, centre des affaires de ce vaste empire, et sur-tout parmi les personnes de la cour et les dames turkes de cette capitale, qu'il faut chercher la pureté, la douceur et l'élégance du langage*» (Jaubert 1823, p. 4; italics mine). I am, once again, grateful to Matthias Kappler for drawing my attention to these works.

51    Qatīl, who very often makes reference to the British in his letters and elsewhere, explicitly mentions the name of 'Mister John Lumsden' (*mistar jān lūmsdīn*) – a director of the East India Company and the elder brother of Matthew Lumsden, professor of Persian and Arabic at Fort Williams and the author of a grammar of the Persian language in English – in the *Nahr al-faṣāḥat* (Qatīl 1874a, p. 47).

52    I refer here to the *Rapport sur la nécéssité et les moyens d'anéantir les patois et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue française* (1794) (see Brunot 1967, I; 204-14).

Khatri linguist (Qatīl 1872, p. 16; translation above). Instead of oversimplifying with quasi-pathological charges of 'Iranophilia' or forced ethnographic identifications, it would probably be more productive to begin saying that by officially establishing hierarchies and drawing boundaries, the ideal polyglot *munshī*-philologist from Hindustan embodied by Qatīl, comfortably moving through the varieties both as a legitimized conoisseur and as a local intellectual, retains the privilege of having his authoritative say on linguistic pedagogy, thus projecting the professional world of the North Indian scribes into a rapidly transforming, uncertain future.

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