MAḤMŪD al-KĀṢĪRĀĪ

COMPENDIUM
OF
THE TURKIC DIALECTS
(Dīwān Lūyāt at-Turk)

Edited and Translated with Introduction and Indices
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Part I

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In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

— in Him there is Assistance —

Praise be to God, most lavish of bounty, and gracious of benefaction; Who sent forth Gabriel, with a detailed Exposition, a Revelation, setting forth clearly what is forbidden and what permitted; to Muhammad, who then followed the Way, and raised up the Lamp and the Guide; at a time when the heartiest was sickly, and the most eloquent was dumb; God bless him and his family, of most noble lineage, and grant them peace.

To proceed. The slave, Mahmūd ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad [al-Ḳāḥarī] states:

When I saw that God Most High had caused the Sun of Fortune to rise in the Zodiac of the Turks, and set their Kingdom among the spheres of Heaven; that He called them “Turk,” and gave them Rule; making them kings of the Age, and placing in their hands the reins of temporal authority; appointing them over all mankind, and directing them to the Right; that He strengthened those who are affiliated to them, and those who endeavor on their behalf; so that they attain from them the utmost of their desire, and are delivered from the ignominy of the slavish rabble; — [then I saw that] every man of reason must attach himself to them, or else expose himself to their falling arrows. And there is no better way to approach them than by speaking their own tongue, thereby bending their ear, and inclining their heart. And when one of their foes comes over to their side, they keep him secure from fear of them; then others may take refuge with him, and all fear of harm be gone!

I heard from one of the trustworthy informants among the Imams of Bukhara, and from another Imam of the people of Nishāpur: both of them reported the following tradition, and both had a chain of transmission going back to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and grant him peace. When he was speaking about the signs of the Hour and the trials of the end of Time,

and he mentioned the emergence of the Orūz Turks, he said: “Learn the tongue of the Turks, for their reign will be long (tawāl, transmitted with raf’ of the tā’).” Now if this Hadith is sound — and the burden of proof is on those two! — then learning it is a religious duty; and if it is not sound, still Wisdom demands it.

I have travelled throughout their cities and steppes, and have learned their dialects and their rhymes; those of the Turks, the Turkmen-Orūz, the Čigil, the Yâyma, and the Qirqiz. Also, I am one of the most elegant among them in language, and the most eloquent in speech; one of the best educated, the most deep-rooted in lineage, and the most penetrating in throwing the lance. Thus have I acquired perfectly the dialect of each one of their groups; and I have set it down in an encompassing book, in a well-ordered system.

1. MS. ʿātimāla, read īātimāla.
I wrote this, my book, asking the assistance of God Most High; and I have named it *Diwan Luyát at-Turk* ("Compendium of the Turkic Dialects"); in order that it be an everlasting memorial, and an eternal treasure; and have Dedicated it to:

His Excellency; of the Hallowed and Prophetic, Imamate, Hashemite, Abbasid line; our Master and Patron; Abū l-Qāsim ‘Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad al-Muqtadī bi-Amrillāh; Emir of the Faithful and Deputy of the Lord of Worlds. May God prolong his abiding in everlasting glory and felicitous life, and anchor the foundations of his authority in such glory that former splendors will abide in his courtyard. May He exalt the degrees of his Proof with such favors that mankind will draw life from the bounty of his hand; with Good Fortune the companion of the auspicious star, and Determination whose arrow hits the mark; with friend joined to glorious victory, and foe weakened by ignominious subjection. May the Muslims never be deprived of his Shadow and his Beauty, his Strength, his Favor, and his Splendor.

And I have set it out according to the order of the alphabet:

[1. 4/5]

and adorned it with words of wisdom and elegant speech, proverbs, verses of poetry, and sentences of prose. Thus did I soften its rough places, and make smooth its pits and hollows. I have spent long years of labor over it, causing each word to lie down in its proper place, and lifting each one out of obscurity; so that the one who seeks it may find it in its correct compartment, and the one who desires it may observe it in its allotted order.

I have comprised this entire language in eight books:

1st — Book of Words Vowel-Initial (*kitāb al-khamz*): we brought this to the fore, taking an augur from the Book of God Most High;
2nd — Book of Sound Words (*kitāb al-sālim*);
3rd — Book of Doubled Words (*kitāb al-muḏāf*);
4th — Book of Words Initial-Weak (*kitāb al-miṭāl*);
5th — Book of Words Medial-Weak (*kitāb dawāt al-ṣalata*);
6th — Book of Words Final-Weak (*kitāb dawāt al-arba'a*);
7th — Book of Nasal Words (*kitāb al-ṣunna*);
8th — Book of Words Joining Two Unvowelled Consonants (*kitāb al-jamʿ bayn as-sākinayn*).

Each of these books I have divided into two parts, Nouns and Verbs; putting the nouns first, then the verbs, and dividing them further into chapters according to their stations, the first ones first, [etc. — i.e., according to length and pattern]. The titles of these books and chapters I have borrowed from Arabic, as technical terms, since people are familiar with them.

I originally intended to structure the book along the lines of al-Khaššī in his

[1. 5/6]

*Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, recording together both words that are in use and those that do not occur, in order to show that the Turkic dialects keep pace with Arabic like two horses in a race. That method would have been more comprehensive. The present structure, however, is more to the point, since it is easily accessible, and people generally prefer it. Therefore I have set down only what is in actual use, and have ignored what does not occur, for the sake of brevity.
On What is Mentioned in the Book and What is Not

Of the names of mountains and deserts, and of rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water, I have mentioned

[1. 26/27]

those which are within the territories of Islam, since their names are on people’s tongues. I have mentioned them because they are well known; but the majority of them I have left unmentioned, because of their obscurity. As for those that are in the lands of Polytheism, I have mentioned a few and have avoided the rest, since there is no profit in mentioning them.

Foreign words in this language are not mentioned.

The same for proper names of men and women, except that I have mentioned those that are well known and widespread, and which therefore require to be known exactly.

On the Classes of the Turks and an Outline of their Tribes

The Turks are, in origin, twenty tribes. They all trace back to Turk, son of Japheth, son of Noah, God’s blessings be upon them — they correspond to the children of Rūm, son of Esau, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, God’s blessings be upon them. Each tribe has branches whose number only God knows. I shall mention only the great tribes and leave the little ones, except for the branches of the Oγις-Turkmān — their branches I shall mention, along with the brands of their cattle, since people need to know them [see 40:41 oγις].

[In the following list] I outline the geographical position of each of their tribes in the eastern world.1 They are listed in order [from West] to East, both pagan and Muslim, beginning with those closest to Rūm. First is: BAJANAK’ bāchānāk, then: QIFJAA’Q qif’āq, then: ‘UGUZ’ oγις, then: YAM’K- yemāk, then: BĀŠI’R T baṣyirt, then: YASMIL2 basmil, then: QA’Y’ qāy, then: YABA’QUV yabāqu, then: TATA’R tuṭār, then: QIR QIZ qirqiz. The last one is closest to Sin.

[1. 28/28]

All of these tribes are opposite Rūm, extending toward the East.

Then: JIKIL qīgil, then: TUXSY tuxsi, then: YATM’ yaγma, then: ‘TRAQ oγρāq, then: JARUQ čaruq, then: JUMUL dōmil, then: ‘UYΓŪR uyγur, then: TANKUT taṣqut, then: XITA’Y xitāy which is Sin, then: TWA’J tawγā which is Māsin. These tribes are middling between South and North.

Each of them is shown in the following circle (map).1

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20 1. I.e., excluding the conquests of the Turks in the Near East and Anatolia.

21 1. The map covers MS. 22-3. The original is in four colors, the key given in the four corners as follows: Rivers are gray. Seas are green. Sands (deserts) are yellow. Mountains are red.
The map covers MS 22-23. In the original, the color key is given in notes each corner as follows: "Rivers are grey. Seas are green. Deserts are yellow. Mountains are red." In this translation of map, the original colors are indicated by shading.
On the Turkic Dialects

The most elegant of the dialects belongs to those who know only one language, who do not mix with Persians, and who do not customarily settle in other lands. Those who have two languages and who mix with the populace of the cities have a certain slurring (rikka) in their utterances — for example, Soydaq, Künzák and Aryu. The second category are such as Khotan, Tübüüt and some of Tangut — this class are settlers in the lands of the Turks. I shall now outline the language of each of their groups.

The language of the people of Jâbarqa is unknown because of their distance and the interposition of the Great Sea between them and Mâşîn.

The people of Mâşîn and of Šîn have a language of their own, although the sedentary population know Turkic well and their correspondence with us is in the Turkic script.

Also the language of Yâjöj and Mâjöj is unknown because of the Barrier and the interposition of the mountains and the sea that is near Mâşîn.

Tübüüt have a language of their own. Khotan also have both a script and a language of their own. Both of these do not know Turkic well.

The Uighur have a pure Turkic language, and also another language which they speak among themselves. [And they have two] writing systems, one in the Turkic script composed of twenty-five² letters which I have enumerated above [6], and in which their correspondence is written, and another which they have in common with Šîn and in which they write their scriptures and registers — no one can read it except their priests.

Those that

I have named to this point are sedentary peoples.

Among the nomadic peoples are the Čömül — they have a gibberish (reşûna) of their own, but also know Turkic; also Qây, Yabâqû, Tatår and Basmûl³ — each of these groups has its own language, but they also know Turkic well.

Then Qürqû, Qûcêq, Oyûz, Tûxsi, Ya Madame, Çîqûl, Oytâq,² and Çarûq — they speak pure Turkic, a single language.

Approaching these is the language of Yemîk and Bâyırt.

24 1. MS. "twenty-four."
25 1. MS. YAS'MIL, Y altered from B.
   2. MS. 'H'RA'Q'; I by a later hand (dark black ink, thin pen).
As for the language of Bulyar, Suvur, and Birchanak, approaching Rum, it is Turvic of a single type with clipped ends (??). 3

The lightest of the dialects is that of Oyz. The most correct is that of Yaama and Tuxsi, and those who dwell on the rivers Ila, Artis, Yamur and Attil, as far as the country of Uighur. The most elegant is that of Khaghani kings and those who associate with them.

The people of Balasayun speak both Soghdian and Turkic. The same is true of the people of Tiraz (Talas) and the people of Mustanat al-Baydash (Ispibab).

There is a slurring (rikka) in the speech of the people of the entire country of Aryu, which is considered to extend from Ispibab to Balasayun.

Kashgar has villages in which Kanchi is spoken, but in the main city [they speak] Khaghani Turkic.

The main part of the lands of the Turks, from the area next to Rum up to Maasin, is five thousand farsakhs long by three thousand wide, making a total of eight thousand farsakhs [sic]. I have indicated all this in the circle (map) in the shape of the earth so that it may be known.

On Dialectal Differences

There is very little variation in the basic language (asl al-harDar [lit. the root-form of the dialects]). Differences occur only in certain letters

[I. 31/31] 26

by virtue of alternation or elision.

Thus, the Oyz and Qiitsaq change every ya’ at the beginning of a word, whether nominal or verbal, into alf or jin. For example, the Turks say: YAL’KIN yelgin for “traveller”; they say: "ALKIN elgin. 0 The Turks call “warm water”: YIL’I’ SUVW yil’y suw; they say: ILI’ illy with alf. Likewise, the Turks call “apex”: YINJUV yinji; according to them it is: JINJUV jinji. And the Turks call “the long hair of a camel”: YUDUV yoydu; with them it is: JUDUV joydu. 0

The Aryu change every medial or final ya’ to nun. For example, the Turks call a “sheep”: QUVY-qoy; they say: QUYN qon. The Turks call “a poor man”: JIYAY-ey; they say: JIYAIN eyan. And the Turks say: QYUV NA’NK qiyyu nyn meaning “which thing?”; they say: QA’NUV qanu with nun.

3. mahdusa al-atraf ‘alA nama’ wAhid. This has been translated as follows: “aber in ein- und derselben Weise verstimmelt” (C. Brockelmann, “MaAum al-KaAharA ‘uber die Sprachen und die Stamme der Turkun im 11. Jahrh.”, KQrdsz-Cosma Archivum 1.1, 1921, p. 38); “mit gleichmaAiger Elidierung der Suffixe” (O. Pritsak, “KqAcharis Angaben ‘uber die Sprache der Bolgaren,” ZDMG 109, 1959, p. 106); “bir dAriye kelimeIn sonu kuAltilmAt” (Tercume 1, 30).

1. Originally SUVF, two dots added to F by later hand (brown ink).
The Oñuz, Qifçaq and Suvärin change every initial mûm to bû'ı. For example, the Turks say: MAN BARDIM mân bardim meaning "I went"; these groups say: BàN BARDUM bân bardum. 0 The Turks call "broth": MUVNû mûn; this class call it: BUVNû bûn. 0

The Oñuz and those who follow them change every tâ' to dâl. Thus, the word for "camel" is: TÂWÀY tewe but they call it: DÂVÀY dävâ. Also, the Turks call a "hole": 'UVÎT üt; they say: 'UVÎD üd. [However,] most dâl's among the genuine Turks correspond to tâ' in Oñuz dialect. 2 For example, the Turks say: BUGDA bögdâ for "dagger"; with them it is: BUKTA bögtä. 0 The "service tree" is: YIKÇA' yîgda in Turkic; in Turkmân-Oñuz it is: YÎGTA' yîgtä. What I leave unmentioned is according to this rule.

Every fâ' produced between the points of articulation for Arabic fâ' and sound bâ' (i.e., w) in [1. 33/31]

Every dotted dâl in the speech of Çigil and other Turks is changed to zây by some of Qifçaq, Yemâk, Suvâr, Bulyâr and those[ in the area] stretching to Rûs and Rûm. Thus, the Turks call "a foot": ADAQ adaq; they call it: 'AZAQ azaq. The Çigil Turks say: QARIN TÜDŢY qarîn tɔdzi to mean "His belly was full"; they say: TUZDÎY tɔdzi with zây. You may form the other nouns and verbs by analogy with these examples.

In summary, the dâl of the Çigil dialect corresponds to yâ' in the dialects of Yaýma, Tuxsi, Oñuz, and part of Arû going up to Şîn; and to zây in the dialect of Qifçaq, etc., going down 2 to Rûm. We shall explain everything in its proper place.

The people of Khotan and Kânçak change every alf at the beginning of a word to hû'. For this reason we do not consider them among the Turks, since they insert into the speech of the Turks what does not belong to it. For example, the Turks call "father": 'ATA' ata; they say: HATA hata. And "mother" is: 'ANA' ana; but they say: HANA' hana. 0

The râ' may alternate with

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1. Final C altered from K by later hand (addition of three dots in brown ink).
2. In MS. this is turned around.

2. MS. mutasfîn, read musfîkân.
lām — this will appear in its proper place [e.g., 145 arqa-, 215 tarqa, taiqa]. The zāy may alternate with sīn, and vice versa — this too will be explained [e.g., 53 āz, ās, 510 qāz/qās].

The ʿOyuz change every ʿayn’ in nouns of time and place to ʿalif. Thus, the Turks say: BAR-AU YIYR bardu yèr meaning “A place of going”; the ʿOyuz change this to: BARA-SIY YIYR bardaṣi yèr. The Turks say: TUR-IYR ‘UTVR turu uyur meaning “The time for standing”; the ʿOyuz say: TURA-SIY ‘UTVR turasi uyur. 0

The qāf may alternate with kāf, and vice versa — this will appear in its proper place, God willing.

This completes the topic of alternation of letters.

As for elision: the groups of ʿOyuz and Qıtaq agree in eliding every medial ʿayn in nouns and in the [de-] verbal form expressing continuity of action. An example in nouns is the word for “white-footed crow”: JUMUQ qumyuq which they call: JUMUQ qumuq dropping the ʿayn. The Turks call “the gullet”: TAM-TAQ tamyaq; they say: TAMAOQ tamaq. A [de-] verbal example: UL ʿAWKA BAR-A-TAN. UL ol ûwkâ baryân ol “He is one who frequently goes home”; the ʿOyuz say: BARA-N UL barân ol with the same meaning. The Turks say: ARQ QULINY ʿURÂ-N ʿUL âr qulini urýân ol “That man is one who constantly beats his slave”; they say: ʿURÂ-N urân. They also drop kāf in nouns, for the sake of lightness; and, in verbs, the kāf which corresponds to ʿayn in the above meaning.

This is the scope of all the Turkish dialects. What remains will be mentioned in the course of [the sections explaining] rules.

For the sake of lightness and conciseness I have put together in a single line all the chapters of the fatḥ, the damm, and the kasr.²

There is no power and no strength save with God Most High.

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In the Name of God the Merciful the Compassionate

Book of Vowel-Initial (hamz) Nouns

Chapter of Biliterals

B

28 1. MS. ʿayn.

2. This indicates the usual order of entries; e.g. 29-30: ʿAJ (ač), ʿUJ (uč, uč), ʿIJ (ič); 95: ʿAT-(ač), ʿUT- (uč, ıč, uč), ʿIT- (ıč), ʿYT- (ıt-).