

Forogh Hashabeiky. *The Missing Link? The New Persian of the 16th – 18th Centuries in Three Socio-Political Spheres*

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Forogh Hashabeiky. *The Missing Link? The New Persian of the 16th – 18th Centuries in Three Socio-Political Spheres*. Uppsala, Uppsala Universitet, 2021, 195 p. (Studia Iranica Upsaliensia 39). open access: <http://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?dswid=-6677&pid=diva2%3A1535311>

- 1 The present work is an account of the Persian language of the period from the 16th to the 18th century, based on a set of “carefully selected” linguistic parameters. The idea is that a study of the language of this period would significantly contribute to a deeper understanding of “the diachronic processes of language leading from late Classical New Persian to Modern New Persian” (p. 16), but also, on a synchronic level, to the study of “dialectal variations of the period and the language changes due to language contact” (p. 16), especially with Turkish. It is clear for everyone interested in the Persian language that both aspects are highly interesting and relevant: The language of this period accounts for the differences between the various contemporary variants of the Persian language (Farsi, Tajiki, Dari) as well as for their peculiarities in relation to Classical Persian. While, as the author points out, there is a number of comprehensive histories of the Persian language, these tend to focus on one particular aspect of the language, such as the verbal system (Lenepveu-Hotz 2014) or on stylistic aspects (Bahar 1990). With her work, the author aims to provide information on the morphosyntactic structures of the language of this period on a broader basis.

- 2 The features analysed include orthographical aspects such as the use of the specific Persian consonant letters in the manuscripts of that period, peculiarities in the notation of the Ezafe, the use of Arabic words and other issues, some of them relevant even today. With respect to morphology, the author, after a short discussion on the analytic/synthetic character of Persian (p. 67), discusses problems such as the formation of the plural, the formation of the comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives, use of pronouns (both clitic and non-clitic), the use of different pre- and postpositions etc. Of particular interest for those seeking information about the differences between (Late) Classical Persian and the transitional period treated in the present book is a comparatively long chapter on the uses of *-rā* (pp. 100-122). Questions on verbal morphology include, among others, the system of aspect-modal verbal affixes, the formation of verbal stems, evidentiality, causative verbs, impersonal constructions, person and number agreement. In treating the system of aspect-modal affixes, the author engages in a discussion with Lenepveu-Hotz (2018) on the existence of a modal opposition indicative/subjunctive in the classical period (p. 124). In the chapter on syntax, the author treats participial constructions and subordination (relative and conditional clauses). The book concludes with a chapter on “stylistic features” (pp. 173-177), which is basically an account of the use of different lexical variants.
- 3 The analysis draws on a corpus of texts from the relevant period from Central Asia, Safavid Iran and Mughal India. The sample includes some very well-known texts, such as the Persian version of the *Bāburnāma* or the *Humāyūn-nāma*. An important criterion for the selection of the texts in the sample seems to have been the existence of English translations, which, in my view, is a very convenient procedure, as it makes the source materials of the work accessible to a broader audience.
- 4 The book is originally conceived to be read and discussed by experts in the field. While the criteria governing the selection of the features to be analysed might seem obvious to this kind of audience, general readers would probably require further elaboration or even a more comprehensive or systematic treatment, including contrastive examples from outside the sample. The book can be used as a reference work or for general orientation on the history of Modern Persian and includes some beautiful illustrations of the manuscripts used.

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