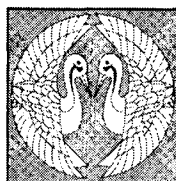


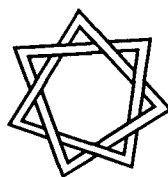
RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
THE INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES
ST. PETERSBURG BRANCH



Manuscripta Orientalia

International Journal for Oriental Manuscript Research

Vol. 5 No. 4 December 1999



75ESA
St. Petersburg-Helsinki

TEXTS AND MANUSCRIPTS: DESCRIPTION AND RESEARCH

J. S. Musaelian

ON THE FIRST KURDISH EDITION OF THE *SHARAF-NĀMA* BY MULLĀ (MELĀ) MAḤMŪD BĀYAZĪDĪ

The *Sharaf-nāma*, a work by the Kurdish historian Sharaf-khān Bidlīsī, is the only monument on the late medieval history of the Kurds, Kurdistan and the neighbouring countries on record. Written in Persian in late sixteenth century, it is a valuable historical and cultural source, which was repeatedly translated into French, Turkish, Arabic, German and Russian. But it was only in 1972 that the composition was published in Sorani, the southern dialect of Kurdish.

Owing to the “Description of the Kurdish Manuscripts from Leningrad collections”, compiled by the late M. B. Rudenko [1], a brilliant expert in the Kurdish language and literature, we know that in the manuscript collection of the National Library of Russia there is a translation into the northern dialect of Kurdish (Kurmanji) of the work by Sharaf-khān Bidlīsī entitled *Tawārīkh-i qādim-i Kurdistān*. The translation which was carried out by the prominent scholar and public figure Mullā (Melā) Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī in the mid-nineteenth century deserves special attention as a very valuable specimen of a literary work performed by an enlightened Kurdish author.

The foreword to the translation, compiled by Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī, contains the name of the eminent Russian Orientalist A. Jaba as an initiator of the translation. In his foreword, Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī briefly informs the reader: “This book by Sharaf-khān is a rarity; there are only two to three scripts in the whole of Kurdistan. I have translated it from Persian into Kurmanji on the request of Mr. Jaba” [2]. After that he says that he translated the book in 1275/1858—59.

Who are these two men — A. Jaba and Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī — whose names are linked inseparably in the history of the Kurdish studies?

August Jaba (1801—1894) was a leading figure in the Kurdish studies of Russia. He entered the Russian diplomatic corps in the East in 1830. In 1856, he was appointed a Russian consul to Erzerum. It was at that time that Academician B. Dorn proposed him to make use of his position to collect and study materials in Kurmanji dialect. Jaba's long stay in Kurdistan gave him a lucky opportunity to learn Kurdish and the life of the Kurds. All his spare time he

devoted to researching and studying materials on literature, language and history of the Kurdish people. He did not stopped this work up to his death.

During his stay in Erzerum, A. Jaba could make acquaintance with many persons of Kurdish origin among whom was Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī, a Kurdish *mullā* and scholar, whose assistance in Jaba's studies was truly invaluable.

According to Jaba's source, Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī was born in the town of Bayazid (Turkey) in 1797. He started his studies in his native town and continued them later in Tebriz. Bāyazīdī had read and studied Qur'ān since his childhood and he knew Arabic, Turkish and Persian literature perfectly. After his journey to Persia and Kurdistan, Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī returned to his native town, Bayazid, where he headed a school and soon gained fame among his compatriots. However, the downfall of Pahlūl Pasha — the last of the ruling Kurdish tribe in Bayazid — made him settle down in Erzerum where he began as a teacher and where he enjoyed great respect from his colleagues in the country. Bāyazīdī made pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina after which he got the name of Ḥājī and was held in great respect among the local Muslim clergy. It should also be added that Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī was an authority among Ottoman state officials as well. On several occasions he was authorised to carry on negotiations between the Ottoman government and Kurdish rebel leaders in Bohtān and Khakkari regions. Thus in 1846, *mushir* Ḥāfīz Pasha entrusted him with parleying with the famous Badr-khān-bek who had headed the rebellion in Jazīra against the Sublime Porte. Also, a year later, on the order of Kāmil Pasha, the then ruler of Erzerum, he was sent to Nūrallāh-bek, Khakkari Kurds chief, who was at the head of the revolt against the Ottoman government. His mission was again to parley with head of the rebels on the terms of stopping the uprising. Jaba reports as well that when Khān-Maḥmūd, Badr-khān-bek's brother, arrived in Erzerum, Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī was authorised to meet and escort him. All this proves that Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī was a figure of importance in relations between the Ottoman government and the Kurdish nobility.

There are some grounds to believe that Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī had secret ties with the leaders of Kurdish insurgents; he commiserated with their struggle against the government and often carried out government commissions in favour of the rebellious Kurds. For example, the author of an article in the newspaper *Kurdistan* (No. 13, 1898), dealing with Badr-khān-bek's revolt, reports that Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī was sent by the Sultan to Jazīra to parley with Badr-khān-bek to stop the uprising of the Kurds. There he promised commander-in-chief of the Ottoman army, Othmān Pasha, that he would try to persuade Badr-khān-bek to stop the revolt and asked Othmān Pasha not to attack Jazīra until his return from Badr-khān-bek. Othmān Pasha, who first opposed Mullā Maḥmūd's plan and did not permit him to go to the insurgents, later let him go but attacked Jazīra without waiting for Badr-khān-bek's answer. The army of Othmān Pasha met, however, a well organised resistance of the Kurdish rebels, which made him conclude that Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī had given out the secret plan of the attack to them. When Mullā Bāyazīdī returned from Badr-khān-bek and expressed protest against Othmān Pasha's attack on Jazīra, the Ottoman commander ordered to arrest Bāyazīdī and convoyed him to Istanbul. He informed the government that Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī was an ally of Badr-khān-bek and the traitor of the state. As a result, Mullā Maḥmūd was exiled to Van.

According to Jaba's account, soon after Bāyazīdī's arrival in Van a new uprising of Khān-Maḥmūd took place in Khevach, the place of Bāyazīdī's residence, not far from Van. As the main suspect Khān-Maḥmūd was put into a prison where he spent 15 days. Only Mullā Maḥmūd's active protection prevented him from a more severe punishment [3]. The incident led to the final loss of trust in Bāyazīdī's loyalty on the part of the Ottoman government.

A. Jaba also tells that Mullā Maḥmūd lost his brother, who was a great support to him, during the Crimean War (1853–1856). Also, after this war his son's business in commerce had come to decline. It is in this period that Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī became Jaba's "collaborateur pour le kourde" [4].

Thus, following Academician Dorn's advice, A. Jaba, along with his studying the Kurdish language, began to collect manuscripts written in Kurdish. With the assistance of the educated Kurds and Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī, who became his most energetic helpmate, the Russian diplomat acquired a number of Kurdish manuscripts and sent them to the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. Mullā Maḥmūd was a copyist, translator and author of some works. In late 1856, Jaba brought back a number of manuscripts collected by him to St. Petersburg, among which were the translation into Kurdish of Turkish proverbs copied by Mullā Maḥmūd and a translation of Persian tales.

Some of the manuscripts, which were brought by Jaba, had come out from under Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī's pen. Those were manuscripts on history, ethnography, folklore and language of the Kurdish people. In 1858–1859, he copied the Arabic-Persian-Kurdish grammar by 'Alī Teremakhī, who worked at the turn of the seventeenth century, and supplied it with his own preface. Here he provides some facts on the life of 'Alī Teremakhī and mentions some other Kurdish scholars and authors who compiled other grammars. The preface also includes some valuable information about school education and cultural life in Kurdistan. In the same period Mullā Bāyazīdī wrote an interesting

work entitled "Kurd's Customs and Manners", the idea of which was communicated to him by A. Jaba [5]. Mullā Maḥmūd is also the copyist and one of the three compilers of the Kurdish-French phrase-book ("Kurdish Dialogues") which was intended to be a Kurdish language manual. This manuscript, completed in 1275/1858–59, has long remained unknown to scholars, although it was among manuscripts kept in St. Petersburg collections. However, Jaba's letter of March, 1876, to Academician B. Dorn contains his mention that he is going to send the manuscript of "Kurdish Dialogues" to St. Petersburg. Only recently the manuscript of "Kurdish Dialogues" was found in the archives of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies when V. F. Minorsky fund was being sorted out. The manuscript found its way here in the following way: in 1913, while in Istanbul, V. F. Minorsky found out that the Jaba's papers had been left with his family in Izmir. Then he asked the Russian consul in that city to make inquiries about the scholar's archive. The consul applied to Jaba's son and that is how Minorsky accounts of the result: "The family willingly sent me the whole pile of the papers, but it turned out that many of the manuscripts had been published in the Academy of Sciences editions. And I could never find out whether there had been a copy of this particular manuscript in the Academy" [6]. This unique manuscript was handed over by Minorsky to the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies in May, 1952, where it remained unknown to researchers for long.

The manuscript including over three thousand dialogues (on 476 pages) covers various aspects of the life of the Kurds in Turkey in the mid-nineteenth century. They provide a valuable material illustrating the morals and manners, rites, customs, etiquette regulations of the Kurds as presented by the authors. The texts present talks between two Kurds and contain some historical information, for example, about the Crimean war, Kurdish tribes, their number and settling. In one of the sections entitled "On the knowledge of languages", one can find some biographical material on Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī.

In his preface to the French translation of the "Dialogues", which was completed in 1880, Jaba says that he is planning to write a biography of Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī. Unfortunately, this biographical work by him has not been found so far.

Jaba, who got his first knowledge of Kurdish literature from Mullā Maḥmūd, was the author of the first French-Kurdish and Kurdish-French dictionaries as well as the dictionary of the Kurdish Khakkari-Rawandi dialects.

After having retired in 1866, Jaba took up residence in Izmir and entirely devoted himself to gathering materials on history, ethnography, literature and language of the Kurds. "I am engaged in a new research of the Kurdish language and literature, and I am working on the translation from Kurdish of a historical book which is the continuation of the history by Sharaf-khān", he wrote in his letter of 30 March, 1867, to St. Petersburg [7]. This letter from Izmir, together with Jaba's French translation (50 pages) of the Introduction to "A New History of Kurdistan" [8], were delivered to the Imperial Academy. There was only very brief information about the work in his letter: "This 'History' was written in 1275/1858–59. There is only one copy of it and it is in my possession. I am going to translate it as soon as I am through with two parts of my dictionary" [9]. The name of

the author of this addition to Sharaf-khān's composition is lacking in the "Introduction", but we know it from the above-mentioned letter of Jaba who reports that "A History of the Kurds", containing 1,000 pages, has been composed on his repeated request by Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī. This work was to be the continuation of the famous *Sharaf-nāma*; Mullā Maḥmūd gave his work the name *Tawārīkh-i jadīd-i Kurdistān*.

Jaba did not send to St. Petersburg the Kurdish original from which the French translation of the "Introduction" was made. Nor did he say anything about the sources for this "New History of the Kurds". At the beginning of the "Introduction" Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī simply refers to Sharaf-khān, recounts a legend about the Kurds' origin, talks about their national character, way of life, dialects, and, finally, about the places of their settling. After that the author mentions a Turkish translation of the work carried out in Bidlis of which, according to Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī, only two or three copies exist.

The "Introduction" is followed by the list of names of Kurdistan's rulers beginning from 1785/86 (that is when the author started his narration) up to 1857. This list and the table of contents containing the titles of 12 chapters which make up the work were cited in A. Jaba's letter to B. Dorn of 13 June, 1867.

This work comprises information about the main regions of Kurds settling (from 1785/86 to 1857/58). The author of the work also turns to even more remote periods of Kurdish history, up to Sharaf-khān's epoch. Unfortunately, the fate of the *Tawārīkh-i jadīd-i Kurdistān*, compiled by Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī, is still obscure. Its translation into French and the manuscript itself might have remained in Jaba's archives in Izmir.

A. Jaba and Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī together gathered a unique in its completeness collection of Kurdish manuscripts (over 50 items, dictionaries excluded) dealing with literature, folklore, history and language of the Kurds. This collection includes a number of unique manuscripts which contain works by such poets as Ḥāris Bidlīsī, Sālim Ibn Sulaymān (Slemān), Durfīshanī, Ramaḍānī and Murād-khān Bāyazīdī of whom very little was known. Thanks to the manuscripts of this collection, literary versions of the well-known Kurdish legends "Laylī and Majnūn", "Yūsuf and Zulaykhā", "Zambīlfrōsh" have come to be known. After these manuscripts had been described in the 60s of the twentieth century, a notable Kurdish scholar, Badr-khān, in his letter to the Russian compiler of the catalogue of Kurdish manuscripts, M. B. Rudenko, wrote that many writings represented by these manuscripts were not familiar to him.

It was in that most fruitful period of his activities that Mullā Maḥmūd completed his Kurdish translation of the *Sharaf-nāma* by Sharaf-khān Bidlīsī. The translation is of great scientific value since it is the only text in the Kurdish language on the medieval history of the Kurds. The surviving manuscript of this translation presents the autograph of Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī. Finally, the language of this Kurdish translation, Kurmanji, mirrors the specific features of the standards of classical Kurdish. Taking into account these circumstances and also the growing interest of the Kurds in historical texts written in their native language, a facsimile edition of the manuscript has been prepared recently [10]. This made the work available for a wide range of Kurdish readers, giving them an opportunity to

familiarise themselves with literary heritage of the nineteenth-century Kurdish scholar.

The manuscript of Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī's translation of the *Sharaf-nāma* contains 257 pages. The translation is preceded by the translator's foreword and the table of contents which however does not always corresponds the chapters in the text. When the facsimile edition of the manuscript was prepared, Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī's autograph was collated with a well-known V. V. Velyaminov-Zernov's edition of Sharaf-khān Bidlīsī's work [11] which is, in turn, the publication of a copy of autograph of the *Sharaf-nāma* preserved in the holdings of the National Library of Russia and which dates to 1598 [12]. The collation has revealed a substantial number of variants as regards proper names, place-names and ethnicons, as well as the lack of correspondence with dates and figures, omissions in indicating place-names and even the lack of some chapters. At the same time, the collation showed that a large passage, constituting one page and a half, is missing in the Velyaminov-Zernov's edition. Besides, this passage is extended by additional brief historical and ethnographic material.

All these variants, abridgements, omissions, corrections and additions present in the Kurdish translation may be explained in two ways. First, Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī undoubtedly translated Sharaf-khān Bidlīsī's work from other than Velyaminov-Zernov's manuscript. Second, Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī's translation largely reflected his own insight into Bidlīsī's text. It was often his interpretation of the text rather than the translation of it, which is revealed by numerous abridgements. Unfortunately, the translator keeps silence concerning the manuscript of the *Sharaf-nāma*, which he made use of.

Now let us turn to the most characteristic features of Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī's translation in comparison to the Persian text of the *Sharaf-nāma* as presented in the Velyaminov-Zernov's edition. First of all, Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī has substantially abridged the original by deleting all passages written in abundantly ornamented style. Thus he abridged the beginnings of all chapters written in this flowery style, only occasionally leaving in his translation this special authorial manner of Sharaf-khān's writing.

The abridgements Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī made can be divided into three groups: (i) those which do not distort the content of the work (the translator sought evidently to convey the essence of Sharaf-khān's work and, at the same time, to simplify the language of the original to make the text more understandable to the general reader); (ii) the abridgements with omissions of some proper names, geographical and ethnical names, historical facts, which obviously also served the purpose of better understanding the text (this does not exclude, however, the supposition that Mullā Maḥmūd translated from an abridged copy of the *Sharaf-nāma*); (iii) the abridgements made in order to attain austerity of the translation style, which, however, deprives the text the high artistic value inherent in Sharaf-khān's work.

The abridgements made deal mainly with the descriptions of feasts, festivities or tragic events. The Qur'ān citations and verses, cited by Sharaf-khān at the end of the sections, are all omitted. Also omitted are chapters on the Ayyūbids, Khakkari rulers, on the town of Jazīra, the legend about the name of the Khīzān fortress and the foundation of the town of Khīzān, the name of the Darzīnī fortress, a long

passage about the Kurds of 'Attaq, about the rulers of Tarjīl and Bāna, about the name of Bidlis and the foundation and construction of the town of Bidlis, the characterisation of Mawlanā Muḥammad Shīrānshī, the etymology of the word *rozḥkī*, the description of the feast on the occasion of the celebration of Sharaf-khān's son marriage, of a feast at Sharaf-khān's, the description of battle preparation, the beginning of a decree and the beginning of the chapter on Sharaf-khān's son Shams al-Dīn.

On the other hand, there are some additions in the translation which are not found in the original. For example, the *Rozḥkī* tribe's description is given, the location of Sheikh 'Adī's grave is indicated. The translator gives also his own interpretation of the origin of the town's name Shahrizūr and so on. The most interesting and substantial addition is however a passage devoted to the dervish Maḥmūd Kalajīrī. A superb poet well-trained in Persian and Turkish poetry, he was a keeper of the government library. He was also appointed the sanjak-bey of Bidlis by the Sultan's decree. It should be mentioned that this addition devoted to Maḥmūd Kalajīrī is present in a Turkish translation of the *Sharaf-nāma* made by Muḥammad (Mehmed) Amīn Bozarslān, who used in his work the Arabic translation of the *Sharaf-nāma* by Muḥammad 'Alī 'Awnī (1958). Apart from this addition, Bozarslān's translation also contains three additional chapters lacking in both Persian texts published by Velyaminov-Zernov and in the Kurdish translation by Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī. Those chapters are chapter 7 — "On the Zarzā emirs [tribe]", chapter 8 — "On the Astūnī emirs [tribe]", chapter 9 — "On the Dāsīnī emirs [tribe]". They are placed in the third section of the second part of this Turkish translation.

There are also some discrepancies in dates and figures. They may be simply slips of the pen by Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī,

but more usual explanation is that the translator worked with a different *Sharaf-nāma* copy. Indications of taxes and gifts received by the rulers, population number and army strength are given in the Kurdish translation in figures (in the original all those are given in Arabic words). The months indications are omitted in the translation. Occasionally, Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī omits the dates, too.

Generally the translator leaves Arabic terms as they are in Sharaf-khān's work, but sometimes Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī substitutes them by Persian and Turkish terms more familiar to the Kurdish reader. Some terms are omitted or translated descriptively. I am not dwelling here on some other minor differences. It may be said that, on the whole, the first Kurdish translation made by Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī conveys the original Persian text exactly.

The translation is of great scientific value, despite all omissions and text abridgements mentioned. Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī's appreciation of Sharaf-khān Bidlīsī's work was very high. As he wrote: "Indeed, Kurdistan owes its history to the pen of that man of great learning who is the most outstanding figure of his epoch" [13]. It should be stressed that Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī was he who continued the work by Sharaf-khān by compiling the work of his own — *Tawārīkh-i jadīd-i Kurdistān*, in which he made abundant borrowings from Sharaf-khān's remarkable composition.

Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī's translation and his other writings can serve a valuable source for further research of this eminent nineteenth-century Kurdish scholar literary heritage. They provide rich material for studying not only the northern dialect of Kurdish but also the history of the Kurdish people.

Notes

1. See M. B. Rudenko, *Opisanie Kurdsikh rukopisei leningradskikh sobraniĭ* (Description of the Kurdish manuscripts from Leningrad Collections) (Moscow, 1961).

2. *Mela Makhmud Baiazidi. Tavarikh-i kadim-i Kurdistan* ("Drevniaia istoriia Kurdistana"). T. I. Perevod "Sharaf-name" Sharaf-khana Bidlisi s persidskogo iazyka na kurdskiĭ iazyk (kurmandzhi) (Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī. *Tawarikh-i qadīm-i Kurdistān* ("Old History of Kurdistan"). Vol. I. Kurdish (Kurmanji) translation of Sharaf-khān Bidlīsī's *Sharaf-nāma* from the Persian), publication of the text, introduction, indices and the table of content by K. K. Kurdoev and J. S. Musaelian (Moscow, 1986), p. 1 (text).

3. A. Jaba, *Recueil de notices et récits kourdes* (St. Pétersbourg, 1860), p. IX.

4. *Ibid.*, p. X.

5. This manuscript was published by M. B. Rudenko in 1963, see her *Mela Makhmud Baiazidi. Nrvy i obychai kurdiv [tekst]* (Mullā Maḥmūd Bāyazīdī. The Morals and Customs of the Kurds [Text]), translation, introduction and notes by M. B. Rudenko (Moscow, 1963).

6. The Archive of Orientalists at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, p. III, on. 1, No. 86.

7. Sankt-Peterburgskii Filial Arhiva Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk (St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences Archive), ф. 776, on. 2, No. 90, fol. 12.

8. *Ibid.*, ф. 2, on. 1—(1865), No. 20, fols. 52—101. For this composition, see E. I. Vasilyeva, "Kniga po istorii Kurdistana, kotoraiia ostaetsia nenaĭdennoi" ("A book on the history of Kurdistan, which remains unfound"), *Pamiatniki pis'mennosti i problemy istorii i kul'tury narodov Vostoka*, XXIV, pt. 3 (Moscow, 1991), pp. 33—59.

9. *Ibid.*, ф. 776, on. 4, No. 10, fol. 2.

10. *Mela Makhmud Baiazidi. Tavarikh-i kadim-i Kurdistan* ("Drevniaia istoriia Kurdistana").

11. *Scheref-nameh ou Histoire des Kourdes par Scheref, Prince de Bidlis*, publiée pour la première fois ... par V. Véliaminof-Zernof, vol. I (St. Pétersbourg, 1860), p. 339.

12. *Sharaf-khan Bidlisi. Sharaf-name* (Sharaf-khān Bidlīsī. *Sharaf-nāma*), translation, introduction, indices and addendum by E. I. Vasilyeva (Moscow, 1967), p. 20.

13. Sankt-Peterburgskii Filial Arhiva Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk (St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences Archive), ф. 2, on. 1—(1865), No. 20, fol. 52.