

# Why Did Shāh Ḥātīm's Collected Works Spawn a Child?

by Arthur Dudley, Columbia University  
add2115@columbia.edu

[Revision of paper presented on 15 April 2010.]

I can't begin with any grand claims of discovery because all of the material I will present today is already well-known to Urdu scholars. But for this project I have tried to be, in the words of Saul Bellow, "a Columbus of the near-at-hand." I want to suggest a reinterpretation of some familiar works by making a simple claim: Eighteenth-century Indian texts on poetic theory that scholars have considered to refer only to Persian poetry were sometimes written with Urdu in mind as well. Persian and Urdu literary culture of the early eighteenth century were not divergent paths in history (with one sliding back towards a decadent Persian past and the other creeping uphill towards vernacular modernity) but rather were two inseparable, albeit differently valued, aspects of the same cultural milieu.

For those of you who know nothing about the period in question, the backstory is this: Persian, specifically the style called Indo-Persian [*taṣarruf-i hind* or *ist'māl-i hind*], had been a language of high culture and literary production for centuries in India.<sup>1</sup> Urdu, a dialect of the local Delhi vernacular which had been heavily influenced by Persian, was at this time competing to become a second language of high culture and

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Alam 1998, 2003 or Phukan 2000.

literary production. My dissertation, of which this research forms a small part, looks at the theoretical underpinnings of this shift from a public sphere which recognized Persian as the sole language of high culture to one in which Persian and Urdu were both accepted. Ostensibly we are talking only about what I have started to call “the politics of poetry” —because Urdu prose does not generally replace Persian prose until surprisingly late in the nineteenth century (Yarshater 1988: 129ff; Faruqi 1998)—but I think we have to conclude that ideas about language more generally were being developed through the medium of literary criticism.<sup>2</sup>

The primary text for my study is only two printed pages long (*Dīvānzādah* 1975: 39-40). It’s the Persian preface [*dībāchah*] to the second edition of the collected Urdu works of a poet called Zuhūr al-Dīn Ḥātim, who was born in 1699 CE.<sup>3</sup> In Urdu and Persian, a poet’s collected works is called a *dīvān* and so Ḥātim’s second edition was cheekily called *Dīvānzādah*, or “Son of the *Dīvān*” (or, I suppose, “*Dīvān*-spawn”).<sup>4</sup> As I mentioned, this preface is very short but has a special significance because it describes the poet’s reasoning in bringing out a second edition of his *dīvān*. As Muhammad Sadiq wrote in 1964 in his history of Urdu literature (the standard reference work in English),

The foreword to *Dīvānzāda* is the only authentic pronouncement we possess in regard to the changes that were taking place in Urdu poetry towards the middle of the eighteenth century. (Sadiq 1964: 79).

---

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of poetry as a function of the state, see Alam 2004 and Meisami 1987.

<sup>3</sup> Ḥatim is his pen-name, or *takhalluṣ*.

<sup>4</sup> The old *dīvān* is also extant: *Dīvān-i qadīm* 1977.

Of course Sadiq is correct if by “authentic pronouncement” we mean a text in which a poet describes, in his own words and on a mechanical level, the stylistic changes in his work over his career. But it is by no means the only source of data to answer the question “how did Urdu poetry change in the early eighteenth century?” There are several treatises on poetics written around the same time that could be put into fruitful dialogue with the *Dīvānzādah* preface to show that poetic theory had an influence on contemporary poets.<sup>5</sup> Urdu literary criticism is notoriously overdetermined (every poet is made to fit into a group or play a role in a narrative arc)<sup>6</sup>—so it’s worth reading texts from the period in dialogue with one another rather than judging them solely on whether they contain ideas that became dominant later in history.

For example, for Sadiq the great aesthetic crime of what he calls “the age of Ḥātim” is its delight in *īhām*, or punning.<sup>7</sup> *Īhām* has been the *bête noir* of Urdu criticism because Sadiq (along with most other critics of Urdu literature since the colonial period) declares this humble rhetorical device to be a pernicious evil which stifles genuine emotion. If only Urdu poets could have freed themselves from the temptation to pun then history would

---

<sup>5</sup> Of course there are also *taẓkirahs*, or biographical dictionaries, from the mid-to-late eighteenth century that provide us with basic information on the poets. However, anyone who works with them as sources know how frustrating it can be to extract critical opinions from them.

<sup>6</sup> The first “modern” history of Urdu literature, *Āb-e Ḥayāt* by Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād (1880), is a case in point, as Frances Pritchett shows in her introduction to the English translation (*Āb-e Ḥayāt* 1907; Azad 2001). For his own rhetorical purposes, Āzād simply invents a trajectory for the development of Urdu poetry that no critical historian could accept.

<sup>7</sup> Sadiq 1964: 75ff. On the same page he provides a couple of useful definitions of *īhām*, which the interested reader can consult.

have turned out differently! I exaggerate slightly<sup>8</sup> but the modern critical obsession with perceived artificiality as epitomized by *ihām* means that Sadiq has a warped frame of reference for what *Dīvānzādah* represents.<sup>9</sup> He tries to have it both ways, by admitting that Ḥatim frequently used punning while implying that the very existence of the *Dīvānzādah* is in fact a direct attack on *ihām*. But since *ihām* was commonly discussed at the time, why doesn't Ḥatim mention it in the preface?<sup>10</sup> There are far more interesting things that Ḥatim *does* mention, so why not concentrate on those?

Ḥatim tells us that he started writing poetry in 1716 CE (1128 AH) at age seventeen and published his first collected works in 1731 CE. Twenty-five years later, in 1756 CE (1169 AH), he published *Dīvānzādah*.<sup>11</sup> So, as many of you will have realized, the quarter century between Ḥatim's first collected works and his second happens to be perhaps the period of the greatest transformation in early Urdu literary culture. But adapting to the

---

<sup>8</sup> But the exaggeration on my part is slight since Sadiq writes: "Ḥatim's life spanned nearly the entire eighteenth century, and therefore represents the rise and fall of the *ihām* ideal" (Sadiq 1964: 78). *Īhām* actually has a long history in Persian poetics and a critical analysis of it first appeared centuries before in the work of Rashīd al-Dīn Vaṭvāt (d. 578 AH/1182-83 CE) (Chalisova 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Of course, artificiality is also the criticism leveled against eighteenth-century Indo-Persian poetry, see Yarshater 1988; Faruqi 2003. A broad overview of Indo-Persian literature is Ghani 1930.

<sup>10</sup> In a discussion of different kinds of poetic interpretation, Ārzū (introduced below) in third preface to *Dād-i Sukhan* calls out the "People of Invention/Metaphor" [*ahl-i badī*] whose fault in interpretation is that they are obsessed with *ihām* and ignore other aspects of good composition. (For a historical account of the meaning of *badī*, see Meisami 2003: 319ff). He satirizes their position in verse: "As good as a camel's fart / is a verse that does not bear two loads [i.e. have wordplay]" [*bā goz-i shutur būd barābar / shi 'rī kih nabāshad-ash do maḥmil*] (Arzu 1974: 10). Āzād's description of Ārzū is interesting because it falsely implies that there was no wordplay in Persian poetry (when Persian influenced Urdu poetry, it supposedly stripped away the indigenous tendency to engage wordplay)—this is, in every respect, nonsense (Azad 1907: 115-6).

<sup>11</sup> The common era dates are approximate conversions from the hijri dates in the text. Of course, "publishing" is a convenient shorthand for "getting a manuscript widely copied" but does not necessarily have any of the implications of print culture. The uses of the written word in eighteenth-century India are not my concern here but the interested reader can consult Green 2010.

greatly changed literary tastes of his audience was not Ḥatim's sole purpose in bringing out a new edition of his collected works: As a young poet is liable to do, he was not careful (he writes) when he selected the poems that went into his first collected works so it was more like a complete works [*kulliyāt*] than a collected works [*dīvān*]. Indeed, he claims that it was difficult for people to carry it (or perhaps, as we would say, "get a hold of it")<sup>12</sup> but nonetheless everyone knew two or three couplets from each poem. The *Dīvānzādah* is an attempt to select the best of these so as not to bore people with the dreck.

The preface provides a snapshot of what literature was thought relevant in the 1750s: Ḥatim claims that he had had no teacher during his career [*"jā'ī ustād khālī dārad"*], so in Persian his teacher (so-to-speak) was the long-deceased Ṣā'ib (1601/2-1677 CE) and in Urdu, Valī (1665/6-1707/8 CE). It is not surprising that Ṣā'ib, the leading light of Indo-Persian poetry in Shāh Jahān's time, should remain a model to emulate in Persian in the eighteenth century; and, of course, Valī is considered to have had a foundational role in Urdu poetry.<sup>13</sup> Ḥatim also lays claim membership in a group of Urdu poets: He notes that he is a contemporary of Shāh Mubarak "Ābrū," Sharaf al-Dīn "Maẓmūn," Mirzā Khān Jān-i Jānān "Maẓhar," Shaikh Aḥsanullah, Mīr Shākīr "Nājī,"

---

<sup>12</sup> "... *naql-i ān bisyār bi-har kas dushwār būd.*" The problem of the weight of reading material is not to be taken lightly. Abū'l Faẓl, when he discusses Rūmī's *Maṣnavī* in volume III of his *Ruqa'āt* [collected letters], says that when the Emperor Akbar was traveling, he wanted to read the *Maṣnavī* but his unabridged copy was "lost luggage," and it was impossible to get a replacement because of its rarity. However, a particular abridged edition was readily available. I am grateful to Professor Muzaffar Alam for the reference, which is p. 44 in an undated lithograph edition.

<sup>13</sup> See Faruqi 2001: 129ff. Ḥatim himself notes that Valī was the first to assemble an Urdu *dīvān* [*"awwal kasī kih darīn fan dīvān tartīb nimūd"*].

Ġhulām Muṣṭafā “Yakrang.” There is one significant name that does not appear in this list, which I take personally because it’s the name of the subject of my dissertation, Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Khān, known to us by his pen-name, Ārzū. He even died in the same year that Ḥātim compiled the *Dīwānzādah*. There are two possible reasons for his name to be missing from the list, even though, as I am about to argue, he was a major influence on Ḥātim: Firstly, he was certainly thought of as primarily (perhaps even exclusively) a Persian poet.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, Ḥātim likely considered him a member of the previous generation since Ābrū, Maẓmūn and Yakrang each learned composition from him (Sadiq 1964: 70).

Far too much of my academic work feels like publicity for Ārzū so I promise that this biographical sketch will be brief—however, you’ll see, I hope, that he was quite a remarkable man and left an enormous, if still poorly understood, influence on his time. He was born in Gwalior around 1689<sup>15</sup> and died in Lucknow in 1756, but he was active in Delhi for most of his career. He is acknowledged even by his contemporaries to have had a pivotal role in shaping Indo-Persian and Urdu literature. He was unique in that he was both a widely-loved poet and also a respected researcher [*muḥaqqiq*].<sup>16</sup> Indeed, he is given a

---

<sup>14</sup> As Āzād implies (1907: 115). Ārzū never compiled an Urdu *dīwān* and so the sum total of his surviving Urdu work consists of some 10-15 dodgy verses preserved in *taẓkirahs* (Abdullah 1965: 42).

<sup>15</sup> Though other sources (including Āzād) give Akbarābād [=Agra] (Introduction to *Muthmir* 1991: 5).

<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the related word *taḥqīq* [research] appears throughout Ārzū’s work, sometimes even in several instances on a single page. For that reason, I think it likely that Ārzū’s perception of his own scholarship was that it was based on more systematic research than that of previous philologists (though it would take a detailed study of the tradition in which Ārzū wrote in order to say this for certain). One of Ārzū’s

number of hyperbolic appellations, including “Lamp of the Researchers” [*sirāj al-muḥaqqiqīn*].<sup>17</sup> He adapted traditional Islamicate philosophy of language into a uniquely Indian philology and was the first Indian to recognize the deep historical tie [*tavāfuq*] between Persian and what we now call the Indo-Aryan languages, that is, the languages of India that are Sanskrit-derived.<sup>18</sup> In other words, he basically invented historical linguistics in order to make some points about how to judge good poetry. Not only did he make rigorous analysis the basis for his literary criticism, he also has the distinction of being the first important teacher of Urdu composition.<sup>19</sup> Most of Ārzū’s major works were published between the compilation of Ḥātim’s old *dīvān* and the compilation of *Dīvānzādah* so the similarity between their aesthetics can hardly be coincidental.

I would like to focus on three parallels between Ārzū’s theories and Shāh Ḥātim’s remarks in the *Dīvānzādah* preface: Firstly, Ārzū calls attention to the origin of words borrowed from other languages and demands that the words be spelled (and thus pronounced) as in their source language. Secondly, he classifies Indian dialects according to their merit as models suitable for poetry, narrowing the scope of what is

---

contemporaries was even called Muḥammad ‘Alīm “Taḥqīq” (d. 1748), but there it probably has the more literal meaning of “ascertaining the truth.”

<sup>17</sup> By his student Ṭek Chand Bahār (qtd. Khatoon 1987: 130). Of course, it’s a pun on his given name, *Sirāj al-Dīn* [“Lamp of the Faith”].

<sup>18</sup> He is aware of the importance of this discovery and cites it in five different works (Abdullah 1965: 54).

<sup>19</sup> Mīr writes in *Tazkirah nikāt al-shu‘arā’* that “All teachers connected with the art of *rekhtah* [i.e. Urdu] are classmates [studying under] this great man [i.e. Arzu]” [*hamah ūstādān mazbūt-i fan-i rekhtah hamshagirdān-i ān buzurgwār-and*] (qtd in Abdullah 1965: 43). Mīr was a younger contemporary of Ārzū (and indeed his estranged relative). Āzād has the striking formulation that Ārzū is to Urdu poetry as Aristotle is to logic (*Āb-e Ḥayāt* 1907: 115). Eighteenth-century *tazkirahs* had similar hyperbole, for example referring to Ārzū as the “Abū Ḥanifah” of Urdu poetry (Abū Ḥanifah being the founder of the Hanafite school of the law in Islamic jurisprudence) (Abdullah 1965: 42).

permitted. He and Ḥātīm share the view that only the speech of the literati [*ahl-i zabān*] of Shāhjahānbād, which is to say what we now call Old Delhi, should be the literary standard for Urdu poetry.<sup>20</sup> Lastly, Ḥātīm lists a number of individual errors in usage (most of them phonetic), which had been criticized by Ārzū.

(1) An interest in etymology is evident in Ārzū's Urdu lexicon, *Navādir al-ālfāz*, which he wrote in 1749 CE (*Navādir* 1951).<sup>21</sup> *Navādir* is a reworking of the first Urdu dictionary, *Ġharā'ib al-luġhāt* by Mīr 'Abdulwāsi' Hānswī, which had been written some 70 years before.<sup>22</sup> This is Ārzū's only known work to deal primarily with Urdu (rather than Persian). But even that requires a hedge because in the preface Ārzū writes that the work he has revised, namely Hānswī's *Ġharā'ib*, was written to illuminate Urdu words unfamiliar to Arabic, Persian and Turkish speakers.<sup>23</sup> The text's modern editor, who certainly knows more on the subject than I do, has no idea what Hānswī's purpose was in writing such a text, but he notes that the analysis is much more sophisticated in Ārzū's revision so Hānswī may have been writing a primer while Ārzū's intended

---

<sup>20</sup> For a later definition, see *Daryā-ye latāfat* by Inshā' (Lelyveld 1993: 61)

<sup>21</sup> We have to be extremely careful with the word "Urdu" here because in the early eighteenth century what we now call the North Indo-Aryan languages were defined very differently from our understanding of it—for example, Ārzū refers to "Hindī-yi Panjāb" meaning that for him, what we think of as a separate language, Punjabi, was a dialect of Hindi. (For more information on British reactions to these categories see Dudney 2007.) Still, alternatives to "Urdu" don't feel right: "Indic" is too vague and confusing, although I think its capaciousness is truest to the dialect continuum that existed in northern Indian at this time; "Hindī" is, of course, the word that Ārzū himself uses but for us it conjures up an entirely incorrect set of associations.

<sup>22</sup> The modern editor's preface notes that there was no progress [*taraqqī*] in Urdu lexicography between Hānswī's work and Ārzū's (*Navādir* 1951: Intro. 1). I have not been able to find any references to other Urdu dictionaries written in that period so we can assume at least that no important dictionary was written then.

<sup>23</sup> "[Hānswī] luġhāt-i hindī kih fārsī yā 'arabī yā turkī-yi ān zabān zad ahl-i diyār kamtar būd dar ān bā ma 'ānī-yi ān marqūm farmūdah" (*Navādir* 1951: 1).



readership was scholarly (Abdullah 1965: 70). The truly remarkable thing about *Navādir* is that in many cases an entry notes whether the word in question is related to Sanskrit or to Persian (Abdullah 1965: 47). To us, for whom it is obvious that Sanskrit and Persian have a historical link (i.e. both are descended from a hypothetical Proto-Indo-Iranian language), this may seem rudimentary but it was cutting edge research at the time making use of an entirely new theory of language.

I want to take this argument further and consider a more general principle that might not be obvious if we only consider *Navādir*. *Mušmir* is Ārzū's long treatise on philology—and I return to my remarks at the beginning of the paper and point out that it has been assumed to refer only to philology in Persian, but I would argue that it tried to formulate more general principles about language.<sup>24</sup> What is most interesting for our purposes is Ārzū's discussion of how words are borrowed from one language into another (*Muthmir* 1991: 209ff). The details are not important—you'll be happy I spared you—but there is one kind of direct borrowing in which a word is fully assimilated. In Arabic, the term is *ta'rib* [making Arabic] and Ārzū coins a corresponding term for Persian, *tafrīs*.<sup>25</sup> There is no such term for bringing foreign words into Urdu but the general principle is the same. Basically Ārzū is conservative in his judgment of *tafrīs* (and

---

<sup>24</sup> For example, it is worth noting that *Mušmir* is full of examples from Pahlavi (Middle Persian) as well as from various Indic languages (including a surprising example from Kashmiri on p. 176).

<sup>25</sup> *Mušmir* is based on a work by the Egyptian polymath Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH/ 1505 CE) called *Muzhir*. The term "*ta'rib*" is one that he uses (and actually I am not sure that Ārzū coined the term "*tafrīs*" but I have not seen it used elsewhere). The interest in foreign words in Arabic originally sprang from a need to interpret non-Arabic words in the Quran (Rippin 2003).

I am presuming, its unnamed Urdu equivalent) and declares that the word must be pronounced as in its original language—unless, of course, one of the old masters of Persian poetry used it in a certain way that would strictly speaking be linguistically incorrect (this is his typical cop-out and shows how important the tradition was to him despite his radically new views on some things).<sup>26</sup> He is horrified that in Auranzeb’s reign, civil servants writing in Persian began to spell the name Bengal according to the Indic pronunciation [*bangālā*] rather than in the traditional Persian spelling [*bangālah*].<sup>27</sup> He cites a couplet in which Ḥāfiz (1350-90 CE) spelled Bengal as “*bangālah*” and so even though everyone knows that in India people say “*bangālā*,” the traditional spelling should be maintained. To return to Ḥātim—remember him?—the preface of *Dīvānzādah* lists a number of spelling changes that correct demotic usages of Arabic and Persian words so that they conform to the spellings in the original languages.<sup>28</sup>

(2) Ārzū’s second influence on Ḥātim is suggested by Ḥātim’s declaration that certain “Hindī” words are to be considered shameful [*qibāḥ*], and the words he lists are all Sanskrit derived, like “*jag*” meaning “world.” This has usually been seen as the first salvo in the *Kulturkampf* whose armistice terms in the early twentieth century were that Hindi was to be “the language of Hindus” (and hence the national language of India)

---

<sup>26</sup> Since the Urdu tradition was comparatively young, there were no old masters to provide such exceptions.

<sup>27</sup> Muthmir 1991: 212-3; cf. Abdullah 1965: 87.

<sup>28</sup> *tashbī* > *tashbīḥ*, *ṣaḥī* > *ṣaḥīḥ*, *biḡānah* > *bīḡānah*, *divānah* > *dīvānah*, etc. Likewise certain vowelings are changed: *marz* > *maraz*, *gharz* > *gharaz*

and Urdu was to be “the language of Muslims” (and of Pakistan) (Rai 2001). Far from being a sectarian move on his part, I believe that it suggests a greater familiarity with word origins and an important attempt to standardize poetry (and language itself for that matter) by rejecting the kind of “Hindavī which they call ‘*bhākhā*’” [*hindavī kih ān rā bhākhā goyand mauqūf kardah*]. In other words, expressions from Braj Bhāṣā, a major literary dialect, were no longer allowed.

We should contextualize this: Famously, Ārzū out-Persianed the Persians by arguing that Indians are actually better judges of Persian than Iranians because while Iranians just pick up the language from the (not necessarily eloquent) people around them, Indians’ knowledge of Persian comes from years of study of the best that Persian literature has to offer. Since Urdu has no corresponding great tradition, one has to learn from eloquent speakers. Thus, Ārzū rejects the authority of almost anyone to provide linguistic data (in contrast to Hānswī, who cited the usage of *qaṣbahs* (small towns) [*qaṣbātī zabān*] as evidence, which Ārzū rejects). Ḥātim concurs: His stated goal is making his poetry conversational so that it is both comprehensible to normal people and appreciated by the elites [*maḥẓ rozmarah-i kih ‘ām fahm wa khāṣ pasand būd ikhtiyār nimūdah*], and the aesthetic standard required to do that must be very strictly defined. In that regard, it is interesting that Ārzū uses the term *Urdū-yi mu‘allā* to refer to the contemporary royal court (Lelyveld 1993)—this is of course what would give Urdu its

name decades later—but no one has satisfactorily explained<sup>29</sup> the significance of another use of the term in *Muṣmīr*: In discussing the difference between “*pahlavī*” and “*darī*” (our current understanding of these forms of Persian is not relevant here), Ārzū argues that the idea that these are two different languages is incorrect, rather Dari is a dialect [‘*ibārat*] of Pahlavi.<sup>30</sup> He writes that according to his research [*bah taḥqīq paiwast kih*], Dari was actually the dialect spoken at the court [*dar*] of various kings while Pahlavi is the language of the royal court [*urdū*]. Furthermore there is no special poetic dialect for each place but rather — this is the key — everyone, no matter where he comes from,<sup>31</sup> composes poetry in “the established language which is none other than the language of the royal court” [*ba-hamān zabān-i muqarrar ḥarf zadand wa ān nīst maḡar zabān-i urdū*]. Thus, the same should be true for vernacular poetry and so Urdu poetry must be based on the language of the royal court rather than on other dialects like Braj Bhāṣā.<sup>32</sup> For his own part, Ārzū seems conflicted, for he too implies that the *ahl-i zabān* [lit. “the people of the language”], who are allowed to pass aesthetic judgments belong exclusively to the

---

<sup>29</sup> Sayyid Abdullah quotes this section of *Muṣmīr*—this is how I became aware of it—in the context of defining what the “*urdū*” in the name of the language could refer to (namely the imperial court at Delhi) but he does not draw any interesting conclusions about the language planning (in the technical sociolinguistic sense) in which Ārzū is clearly engaged in here.

<sup>30</sup> qtd. Abdullah 1965: 60. Previously, Ārzū writes, people assumed that Dari was the language of “the people of the hill and valley” [*mardum-i kūh-o darrah*] and that Pahlavi was the language of the city, specifically of the people at the side [*pahlū*] of places where Arabic was spoken. For us, “Dari” refers to the dialect of Persian spoken in Afghanistan and “Pahlavi” refers to a chancellery dialect which was written in Aramaic script and never actually spoken. It is not clear to me what kind of chronology Ārzū assigns to these two dialects.

<sup>31</sup> He provides a list of poets which ends with “Khusrau from Delhi.”

<sup>32</sup> Ḥātīm quotes four lines by his contemporary Ābrū that mock the pretension that incorporating odd Persian expressions into Urdu poetry necessarily entails. Ḥātīm lists several Persian words like the prepositions “*dar*” “*bar*” and “*az*,” and the pronoun “*ū*” that have no place in Urdu poetry.

royal court [*urdū-yi mu'allā*], and yet refers to the language of his own birthplace, Gwalior, (“Gwālyārī” i.e. Braj) as the most eloquent [*afṣaḥ*] of Hindi dialects (qtd. Abdullah 1965: 59, cf. 62). My theory at this point is that he means that speakers of the latter are eloquent in conversation but not necessarily in judging poetry. This, however, is problematic and hopefully after more reading I can refine it.<sup>33</sup>

(3) The third and final category of influence on Ḥātim is worth just a brief summary. Ārzū corrects a number of spelling practices in *Navādir* and elsewhere, and several of these are changes that Ḥātim himself makes as well. The first is familiar from the Bengal example above, namely paying attention to whether a word ends in *alif* [-ā] or in *he* [-ah].<sup>34</sup> Indic words usually end in *alif* and Persian words usually end in *he* so Persian words used in Urdu are given their *he* ending back. Arzu was one of the first writers to think seriously about the phonetic properties of Indian languages<sup>35</sup> which have retroflex consonants (like ‘ṛ’ or ‘ḍ’) (the tongue curls back towards the top of the mouth) and aspirated consonants (meaning that a sound is pronounced with more breath). Ārzū finds it laughable that someone wrote a Persian verse rhyming “*sang*” [stone] with an unaspirated ‘g’ with the name Jagat Singh, which ends with an aspirated ‘gh’. Ḥātim

---

<sup>33</sup> The major problem being that Braj is the language of most of the Krishnaite devotional poetry of Ārzū’s time, but to my knowledge he never mentions it. Seeing as he has an encyclopedic knowledge of the world around him (see the mind-blowing entry on *chatrī* (canopy) in *Navādir*, for example) it is inconceivable that he did not know about the famous poetry of his hometown.

<sup>34</sup> *sharmindā* > *sharmindah*, *pardā* > *pardah*, *bandā* > *bandah*, etc. In modern Urdu, the -ā ending and the -ah ending are pronounced identically but in the eighteenth century there seems to have been a difference, or at least they were considered different for the purposes of rhyme.

<sup>35</sup> Prior to his work came Mirzā Khān, whose treatise on Braj, *Tuḥfat al-hind* (c. 1675), is a wonderfully unique text (*A Grammar of the Braj Bhakha* 1935).

doesn't mention aspiration but he does note that the Persian 're' [r] should not be rhymed with the Indian 're' [r]: the latter is retroflex and the former is not. Prior to this time, retroflexed and unretroflexed consonants were often interchangeable and there were otiose letters (meaning letters that are written but not pronounced), both of which Ārzū corrected.<sup>36</sup> I'll ignore a few other features because the point is clear that Ḥātīm is thinking more carefully about the underlying properties of the language he is using.

Ārzū's great contribution to Urdu literature was his standardization of the poetic language, primarily through his obsession with research [*taḥqīq*]. I have argued that the development in Ḥātīm's sensibilities as a poet reflects the ideas that Ārzū promulgated between the publication of Ḥātīm's first *dīvān* and *Dīvānzādah*. I have hopefully made a convincing case for the need to read eighteenth-century literary criticism on Persian in order to better understand the development of Urdu literature of the same period.

---

<sup>36</sup> However, it is important to note that *Navādir*'s editor admits that some of these spelling changes could have come about because of some later copyist and not from Ārzū himself.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Āb-e Ḥayāt* of Muhammad Husain Azad. Lahore: Naval Kishore, 1907.
- Dād-i Sokhan* of Siraj ud-Din ‘Ali Khan Arzu. Edited by Sayyid Muhammad Akram. Rawalpindi: Iran Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, 1974.
- Daftar-i sirovum* of Abu'l Fazl Allami. Undated lithograph. (UChicago library call number DS461.4.A28 1890)
- Dīvānzādah* of Zuhur al-Din Hatim. Edited by Ghulam Husain Zulfiqar. Lahore: Maktabah Khiyaban-e Adab, 1975.
- Dīvān-i qadīm* of Zuhur al-Din Hatim. Edited by ‘Abd al-Haq. Delhi: Delhi University, 1977.
- A Grammar of the Braj Bhakha (Tuhfat al-Hind)* of Mīrzā Khān. Translated by M. Ziauddin. Calcutta: Visva-Bharati Bookshop, 1935.
- Muthmir* of Siraj ud-Din ‘Ali Khan Arzu. Edited by Rehana Khatoon. Karachi: Institute of Central and West Asian Studies, University of Karachi, 1991.
- Navādir al-ālfāz*, of Siraj ud-Din ‘Ali Khan Arzu. Edited by Sayyid Abdullah. Karachi: Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu, 1951.

### Secondary Sources

- Abdullah, Sayyid. 1965. *Mabāhis*. Lahore: Majlis-e Taraqqi-ye Urdu.
- Alam, Muzaffar. 1998. "The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics." *Modern Asian Studies* 32 (2): 317-349.
- — —. 2003. "The Culture and Politics of Persian in Pre-Colonial Hindustan." In *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, edited by Sheldon Pollock. Berkeley: University of California.
- — —. 2004. *The Languages of Political Islam: India 1200-1800*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Azad, Muhammad Husain. 2001. *Āb-e Ḥayāt*. Translated by Frances Pritchett in association with Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Chalisova, N. 2004. "Īhām." *Encyclopedia Iranica*, <<http://www.iranica.com/articles/iham>>.
- Dudney, Arthur. 2007. "Braj Reinvented: Some British Approaches to Hindi Dialects." Unpublished essay.
- Faruqi, Shamsur Rahman. 1998. "Unprivileged Power: The Strange Case of Persian (and Urdu) in Nineteenth Century India." *Annual of Urdu Studies* 18: 3-30.
- — —. 2001. *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- — —. 2003. "A Stranger in the City: The Poetics of *Sabk-i Hindi*." Unpublished essay.

- Ghani, Muhammad Abdul. 1930. *A History of Persian Language and Literature at the Mughal Court*. Vol. 3 (Babur to Akbar). Allahabad: The Indian Press.
- Green, Nile. 2010. "The Uses of Books in a Late Mughal Takiyya: Persianate Knowledge Between Person and Paper." *Modern Asian Studies* 44 (2): 241-265.
- Khatoon, Rehana. 1987. *Aḥwāl-o asār-e khān-e ārzū*. Delhi: Indo-Persian Society.
- Lelyveld, David. 1993. "Zuban-e Urdu-e Mu'alla and the Idol of Linguistic Origins." *Annual of Urdu Studies* 8: 57-67.
- Meisami, Julie Scott. 1987. *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- — —. 2003. *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Poetry: Orient Pearls*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Phukan, Shantanu. 2000. "The Rustic Beloved: Ecology of Hindi in a Persianate World." *Annual of Urdu Studies* 15: 3-30.
- Pritchett, Frances W. 2003. *Urdu Meter: A Practical Handbook*. <[http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ghalib/meterbk/00\\_intro.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ghalib/meterbk/00_intro.html)>.
- Rai, Alok. 2001. *Hindi Nationalism*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Rippin, Andrew. 2003. "The Designation of 'Foreign' Languages in the Exegesis of the Qur'ān." In *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish and Joseph W. Goering. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sadiq, Muhammad. 1964. *A History of Urdu Literature*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Yarshater, Ehsan. 1988. "The Indian or Safavid Style: Progress or Decline?" In *Persian Literature*, edited by Ehsan Yarshater. New York: Columbia University Press.