

A Mosaic of Arabic-Persian Translation History: Codex Hudā'ī Efendī¹

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A. Azarnush, *In Memoriam*

Abstract

Early Persian translations of the *Qur'ān* are invaluable resources for understanding linguistic and translational developments in post-Islamic Iran. This study examines the Codex Hudā'ī Efendī, an Early New Persian translation of the *Qur'ān*, dated 621_{AH}/1224 and housed in the Hedā'ī Efendī Library in Istanbul. As one of the earliest complete and pure Persian renditions of the *Qur'ān*, the manuscript is introduced and analyzed in detail for its translational features, with its linguistic characteristics briefly explored. The study identifies archaic and regional terms and touches on phonological features. The translational analysis reveals a predominantly word-for-word approach, maintaining the original Arabic syntax, with occasional modifications and additions likely influenced by *Qur'ānic* exegeses or the translator's personal beliefs. Instances of untranslated words, incorrect translations, and interpretative modifications shed light on the translator's strategies and the challenges of rendering the *Qur'ān* into Persian. As a case study, this research highlights the manuscript's significance in understanding the historical, linguistic, and translational context of early Persian *Qur'ān* translations, showcasing the complexities and challenges of translation practices in early post-Islamic Iran.

Keywords: Arabic-Persian Translation, Codex Hudā'ī Efendī, Early Persian *Qur'ān* Translations, Linguistic Features, *Qur'ānic* Exegesis

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1. *Dēwān Āmadend!*³

Following the Islamic conquest of Iran, Arabic became the official language of the region. As Islam expanded beyond the Ḥijāz and into other territories, it became imperative for newly converted Muslim populations, as well as those who retained their ancestral religions under the condition of paying the *jizyah*, to familiarize themselves with the *Qur'ān* and its laws. This necessity prompted Iranians to undertake translations of the *Qur'ān* and compile Arabic-Persian dictionaries. These two categories of texts—*Qur'ānic* translations and lexicographical works—are invaluable for their preservation of numerous Persian terms that later fell into disuse and can now be traced only through these documents. Additionally, as noted by the 6th century lexicographer Bādī (2018/1397_{SH}, p. 51), regarding Persian translations of his era, the language of these texts often reflects the vernacular of a specific region,

3. “*Wa-lammā nazarat al-furs-u ila-l-‘Arab-i ... tanādū, ‘Dēwān āmadend! Dēwān āmadend!’*” (Dīnawarī, 1960/1379_{AH}, p. 126). Cf. also “*čiyōn dēw dēn dārēnd*” (describing *tāzīgān*) in the pathetic *Abar Madan ī Šāh Wahrām ī Warzāwand* (the most recent ed. by Daryaei, 2012).

An earlier version of this article’s abstract was presented at the 5th Conference on Interdisciplinary Approaches to Language Teaching, Literature and Translation Studies (Mashhad, Iran). Based on the linguistic data retrieved from this manuscript, the author designed “A Linguistic Method for Identifying Plagiarism in Persian Retranslations,” which was presented at the 1st RITS International Conference (Tehran, Iran). Gratitude is due to Dr. Morteza Karimi-Nia, who provided access to the digital version of the manuscript under study, and to the anonymous reviewers of the journal for their insightful comments. The author also acknowledges the assistance of ChatGPT (version GPT-4, OpenAI) in proofreading and refining the English for publication. A detailed explanation of the transliteration and transcription systems employed in the present article will appear in the introduction to *History of Translation from Arabic into Persian* (Bigdeloo, forthcoming b). Meanwhile, the following remarks may be necessary: Arabic and Persian homographs are treated differently in transliteration and transcription; thus, “*ḍ*” is used for *dhāl* in words of Iranian origin, whereas “*dh*” is retained for those of Arabic origin. When in the initial position, hamza is not represented (as is common in Iranian studies). Transliterations are italicized to distinguish them from transcriptions, which remain non-italicized and diplomatic. The transliterations of the *āyas*, with minor modifications, follow The Corpus Coranicum (<https://corpuscoranicum.de>). All non-English passages quoted in this article, unless stated otherwise in the text or mentioned in the Works Cited, are translated by the present author.

making them challenging for individuals from other areas to comprehend. Since translators and authors of these works were influenced by the local dialects of their communities and their own interpretative frameworks, a single Arabic term frequently has numerous and varied Persian equivalents across these texts.

The examination of early Qur'ānic translations thus offers a window into how the *Qur'ān* was received and interpreted across different eras and regions. Furthermore, such analyses shed light on the translational practices and conventions of the time, as well as on the broader sociolinguistic context of early Islamic Iran. One such invaluable work is the Codex Hudā'ī Efendī, a pure—i.e., consisting solely of the translation without any commentary—early Persian translation of the *Qur'ān*, currently preserved in the Hudā'ī Efendī Library in Istanbul. The study adopts a multidisciplinary approach, combining codicological, orthographic, linguistic, and translational analysis to examine the Codex Hudā'ī Efendī. The manuscript's codicological and orthographic features are assessed to establish its historical and material context, followed by a brief examination of the linguistic features reflected in the Persian translation. For the translational analysis, the study investigates the manuscript's translation method, including its adherence to Arabic syntax, exegetical influences, and instances of modification or omission. Special attention is given to the classification of translation strategies, such as over-translation and translator's additions, followed by a dedicated section on “overtly erroneous errors” (borrowing J. House's term).

2. Early Pure and Full Dated Persian Translations of the *Qur'ān*

The number of early Persian translations of the *Qur'ān* that are both pure—containing only the translation without commentary—and fully dated is relatively small. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the earliest pure and fully dated Persian translations of the *Qur'ān* hitherto found (prior to the significant historical watershed of the Mongol invasion) are as follows:

1. The Earliest Translation: The earliest complete Persian translation of the *Qur'ān* is a manuscript dated 546_{AH}, transcribed by Abū al-Faxr al-Za'farānī (Figure 1.1). This manuscript is currently housed in the Reza Abbasi Museum⁴. As Šādeqī (2018/1397_{SH}, p. 8) notes, from a linguistic perspective, this translation exhibits significant similarities with Sūrābānī's translation (better known as Sūrābādī) and *Tafsīr-e Šunqušī*. It is thus likely that this translation originated in the vicinity of Neyšābūr.

2. The Second Translation: The second notable manuscript is cataloged as no. 9680 and dated 555_{AH}/1160 CE. It is preserved in the Central Library and Documentation Centre of the University of Tehran (Figure 1.2). An analysis of its lexical choices suggests that the translation reflects a Transoxianan dialect and was likely produced in that region.⁵

3. The Third Translation: The third manuscript, numbered 661, is dated 13 Šafar 556_{AH}/1161. It was transcribed by Abū 'Alī Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Xaṭīb near the city of Ray and is currently preserved in the Āstān-e Qods Central Library and Documentation Centre (Figure 1.3). This translation was edited and published by M-Š. Yāḥaqqī in 1364_{SH}/1985.

The Codex Hudā'ī Efendī, transcribed in 621_{AH}/1224, represents, thus, the fourth oldest pure and fully dated Persian translation of the Holy *Qur'ān*.

4. On this ancient translation, see Karīmī-Niyā (2019/1398_{SH}).

5. One notable feature of this manuscript, worth mentioning in passing, is that the words on its first 130 pages are marked with diacritics, providing insight into the pronunciation practices of the translator's time and region. Additionally, the letter kāf is frequently marked with three dots above it to denote the sound /g/, distinguishing it from /k/.



Figure 1 1. *Qur'ān-e Za'farānī* (Reza Abbasi Museum, Tehran, 546AH/1152, the last page; taken from Karīmī-Niyā, 2019/1398_{SH});

2. *Qur'ān* Translation Ms. no. 9680 (the Central Library and Documentation Centre of the University of Tehran, p. 89);

3. *Qur'ān* Translation, Ms. no. 661 (Āstān-e Qods Central Library and Documents Centre, p. 248)



Figure 2. *Qur'ān* Translation, Hudā'ī Efendī library, Ms. No. 20, the first folio

3. *Qur'ān* Translation Codex Hudāī Efendī

3.1. Codicological Features

The manuscript is housed in the Hudāī Efendī Library in Istanbul. It contains the full text of the *Qur'ān*, accompanied by an interlinear Persian translation, spanning 338 pages. Each page consists of 22 lines—11 lines of the *Qur'ān* text, written in larger characters, and 11 lines of Persian translation, rendered in a cursive script (*naskh*). As seen in the manuscript photographs, both the Arabic text and its Persian translation are written in brown ink, likely walnut brown.

The manuscript's decorative feature is a brown-russet circular motif that appears in the margin of each page (Figure 2). The variant *qirā'āt* in the Arabic text are reflected in the margins, a feature explored by Ja'farī-Tabār and Ḥājīyān-Nežād (2023/1402_{SH}). The margins of the first two pages are adorned with a red and brown frame.

The manuscript appears to have undergone restoration at some point (presumably by the librarians), though ineptly. As a result, the first lines of each page are obscured by patches, rendering them illegible. Additionally, certain parts of the text, particularly the text of al-Fātiḥah, are more intensely colored than others. This suggests that the text has been subject to significant wear and erasure over time, and that efforts were made to highlight these sections. It is also likely that at least two pages, now missing, preceded the beginning of the Surah al-Fātiḥah. The loss of the initial pages is notable for their potential ornamental figures and drawings, as well as the information they may have contained about the manuscript's owner or commissioner or, though less likely, a short introduction or note by the translator.

At the beginning of each Surah, information is provided in Persian, detailing the name of the Surah, the number of verses and words, as well as the virtues and properties of each Surah. The textual-linguistic makeup of the translation suggests that it, like most others of its era, does not seem to serve a normative purpose. Although

equivalents for a considerable number of religious terms appear to have been established prior to this translation, its language is primarily shaped by the linguistic usage of the translator and/or the transcriber's community. This phenomenon is also observed in other historical translations, such as the Greek Septuagint (see Joosten, 2007; Aejmelaeus, 2013). Consequently, unlike standardized texts, its internal inconsistencies provide valuable insights into the historical development of the Persian language and translation practices.

While the name of the transcriber is unfortunately illegible in the colophon, the date of transcription is clear. It reads as follows (Figure 3):

وَقَعَ الْفَرَاغَ مِنْ تَخْرِيرِ هَذَا الْمُصْحَفِ الْجَامِعِ فِي أَوَاخِرِ مَاهِ صَفَرٍ حَتَّمَهُ اللَّهُ بِالْخَيْرِ مِنْ شُهُورِ سَنَةِ أَحَدَى وَعِشْرِينَ وَسِتْمَايَةَ.

Translation: Transcribing this complete muṣḥaf was concluded around the end of the month of Ṣafar, one of the months of the year 621_{AH}, and may God bring it to a good conclusion.

Hence, it cannot be definitively established whether the transcriber was also the translator. Therefore, any errors detected in the translation (see §3.4, especially §3.4.5) may not necessarily reflect the translator's own mistakes and could instead be ascribed to the transcriber.

6. The use of Persian *māh* instead of Arabic *šahr* in Arabic date formulas illustrates the continued influence of Persian on the Arabic world during the Islamic period. For further examples of this, see Minorsky (1942, p. 184), Blair (1998, p. 219) and Afšār (2009a/1388_{SH}, §§1420, 1441; the tombstone inscription photo in Afšār, 2009b/1388_{SH}, §1479), and also in the Tūrān-Pošt inscriptions from the 3rd to 5th centuries AH (Tūrānpoštī, 2023/1402 SH, pp. 491–492). Cf. also the use of the same Iranian word “m’h” in the Aramaeo-Iranian inscription Laghman I, where it replaces the Aramaic word for “month,” *yarḥ*: B¹LWL m’h ŠNT 16 “in the month Elül, year 16” (Humbach, 1974, p. 242).



Figure 3. Qur'ān Translation, Hudā'ī Efendī library, Ms. No. 20, the last page

3.2. Orthographic Features

- In this manuscript, as in most early Persian manuscripts, the phoneme /ž/ is consistently represented by three dots (here shown through ž), as seen in words such as “kž” (devious) (p. 227v), “kžy” (deviousness) (pp. 162r, 314v), “ždh” (dragon) (p. 203r), “žrf” (deep) (p. 210r), “kž” (tamarisk tree) (p. 237r), and “žk” (spark) (p. 327r).
- The phonemes /č/ and /j/ are not distinguished; both are represented by jīm.
- The letter kāf stands for both /k/ and /g/.
- The prohibitive prefix *ma-* is used in a few cases and is written separately as “mh” + the base verb, such as “mh fryb’δ” (Do not let deceive) (p. 228v).
- The negative prefix *na-* is always attached to the verb.
- The plural suffix *-hā* is consistently attached to the base noun.

- The words *ānče* (what) and *ānke* (who) are represented as “`nǰ” and “`nk”, respectively, in the manuscript.
- The so-called *hā-ye nā-malfūz* (unpronounced -h) is commonly omitted when followed by the plural suffix *-hā*; for example, “k`sh`” (bowls) (p. 237r), “ǰšmh`” (fountains) (p. 254v).
- The particle *ki* (that) is typically written separately as a *kāf* with an open tail extending to the left, “kh”, or “ky”, but in a few cases, it is prefixed to the following word.
- The phoneme /p/ is usually represented by the letter *bā* and, hence, is not distinguished from its voiced counterpart /b/. In a few instances, however, it is marked with three dots (here shown through P), as seen in “pδr” (father) (p. 333r), “pšr” (back) (p. 333r), and “bpr`knyδ” (do scatter) (pp. 309r, 309v).
- Intervocalic and final postvocalic /d/ is frequently represented by *dhāl* (here: δ), which reflects the phonetic reality of the time. However, there are occasional exceptions, such as “p`dš” (reward) (p. 331r).
- The letter *alif* rarely has its *madda* in the manuscript.
- The durative and iterative prefixes *mē-* (used sparingly) and *hamē-* are consistently written separately.
- The word for “red” is written with *šād* (p. 319r) in this manuscript, as it is in several Early New Persian texts.

The manuscript is not free from scribal errors. For instance, the phrase “gft kh`nkh kn y`” (p. 145v), translating *wa idh qāla*, appears twice. Similarly, “wyr` kwy`” intended to translate *yaqūlu lahu*, is written twice, incorrectly.

3.3. Linguistic Features

Due to space limitation, this section highlights only the most critical linguistic aspects of the manuscript, which may be of value for understanding the linguistic evolution and regional diversity of Early New Persian. A comprehensive discussion will follow in a future publication.

1. Lexical Features: These include rich use of archaic and regional lexicon, some rooted in Middle Persian (e.g., *gehān* “world” < MP *gēhān*); Unique word forms (e.g., *tāsinginī* “grief-strickenness”, and *vuč(/j)ārdan*, which translates Arabic stem FṢL “to

be made distinct⁷, and corresponds to MP *wizār-* “to separate⁷) not documented in Persian lexicography. Worth mentioning is also the frequent use of the pre-verb/preposition *hā-*, from Old Iranian **frā-* (on which, see my *Early Judaeo-Persian*, forthcoming a, Ch. 15), alongside the commoner form *farā-* (on the justification for this inconsistency, see the Conclusion).

2. Phonological Features: Evidence of phonetic evolution, including: Contraction: *t-t* > *t* (e.g., *bad-tar* > *batar* “worse”; cf. Bactrian *oataro* /*watar*/); shortening: *ā* > *a* (e.g., *pādāš* > *pādaš* “reward”); lengthening: *a* > *ā* (e.g., *pidar* > *pidār* “father”); shifts: *b* > *v*, *h* > *y*, etc.; elision as, e.g., in the synchronic loss of the initial *ā-* in *āwāz-dahanda* > *wāz-dahanda* “proclaimer”); and retention of certain older forms (e.g., long *-ī* as *iḏāfa*).

7. The verb is attested with this very meaning in the passive voice, featuring the initial *w-* > *b-* (or *β-*), i.e. *בי בזארהינד* (by *bz' rhynd*), in the Early Judaeo-Persian translation-commentary of Ezekiel (text: Gindin, 2007, vol. 1, p. 223; translation: Gindin, 2007, vol. 2, p. 378):

צון גוספנדאן יך אז יך *בי בזארהינד* ... נגאה אברשאן המי כוניד.

When (his) sheep **separate** from one another ..., he watches over them.
The verb is discussed in greater detail in Bigdeloo (forthcoming c, §32).



Figure 4. Qur'ān translation, Hudā'ī Efendī library, Ms. No. 20, f. 200

3.4. Translational Features

3.4.1. Translation Method

The translator predominantly employs a word-for-word method, rendering each word of the Qur'ān with its Persian equivalent, transcribed directly below the Arabic word (Figure 4). In terms of syntax, the word order of the source text is preserved. As a result, the translation often appears incongruous and ungrammatical when compared to standard Persian sentence structure. As Lazard (cited in Filippone, 2011, p. 225) aptly observes, early interlinear Persian translations of the Qur'ān were not designed to be read as independent, standard Persian texts⁸. Instead, they were intended as supplementary aids for explaining the Qur'anic text and, as such, functioned primarily as pedagogical tools. In this context, he suggests that the

8. Reminiscent of Kemp's view (cited in Reiß, 1971, p. 100) on interlinear translation in general, which "führt ja nur ein Schattendasein und erscheint niemals ohne das Original, dem sie dient."

translators of early Persian *Qur'ān* translations are more accurately described as “glossators” rather than “translators.”

The literal or word-for-word translation method has been traditionally used when rendering sacred texts across various cultures, including China (Cheung, 2014), the Western world (Amos, 1920, pp. 49-80), and among Arabs (Abdulla, 2021, pp. 94ff). Even in pre-Islamic Iran, this method was employed for translating the Avestan texts. As Macuch (2009, p. 128) elaborates, the primary extant body of the Pahlavi Zand of the Avestan texts represents “a slavish word-by-word translation of the original, where the translator aims to preserve the exact sequence of words from the Avestan text with as few changes as possible, conforming to Pahlavi grammar and syntax.”

The choice of this method, aside from its educational function to help learners of the *Qur'ān*'s language, lies in the sanctity of these source texts. Translators sought to preserve the original meaning as accurately as possible to avoid accusations of heresy. A relevant account from *Al-Fihrist* by Ibn al-Nadīm (1970, vol. 1, p. 41) quotes a translator named Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām⁹:

I have translated ... the Torah, the Gospels, and the books of the prophets and disciples from Hebrew, Greek, and Ṣabian, which are the languages of the people of each book, into Arabic, verbum ad verbum. In so doing I did not wish to beautify or embellish the style for fear of distortion¹⁰.

As noted earlier, this approach resulted in syntactically awkward and unusual sentences in some cases. For example:

9. Krachkovskii (as cited in Metzger, 1974, p. 159), who has examined this passage in *al-Fihrist*, proposes that Ibn Nadim may have confused the translator with ‘Abd Allāh ibn Salām (d. 663 AD), a Jewish convert to Islam.

10. Two revisions were made to the quoted translation by Dodge. While he renders *taḥrīf* and *ḥarf-an ḥarf-an* as “inaccuracy” and “letter for letter”, I opted for “distortion” and “verbum ad verbum” respectively.

1. *Wa-lākinna akthara n-nāsi lā yaškurūna* (*Qur'ān* 2:243)

Walēkin bēštarēn-e mardumān nakunand šukr. (p. 25v)

Translation: but most of the people thank do not.

2. *In kuntum tu' minūna bi-llāhi* (*Qur'ān* 24:2)

Agar hastēδ ki begrawēδ ba x^waδāy. (p. 193r)

Translation: if you are that you believe in God.

However, in a few instances, the translator deviates from the strict word-for-word method to produce a more natural translation in line with Persian stylistic norms. For example, the phrase *yā ayyuha llaḏīna āmanū* (*Qur'ān*, passim) is rendered as "ey mūminān" (O believers!) (pp. 59r, 62r, 67v, 68r, 70v, 72r). This deviation can be considered a form of a strategy loosely referred to as "transposition" (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2014, pp. 90–91).

3.4.2. Exegetical Translation

The term "exegetical translation" is used by the researcher in this article to describe instances where the translation of Qur'ānic words goes beyond their literal meanings. In these cases, the equivalents selected by the translator are not confined to the dictionary definitions of the terms but are influenced by the translator's personal beliefs and the doctrinal principles of the particular branch of Islam to which they adhere. In other words, in these instances, the translator functions more as an "exegete" than as a "translator."

An example of this can be found in 2:55, where *fa-axaḏatkumu ṣ-ṣā'iqatu* is translated as "*u be-girīft šumā rā 'adhāb-e marg*" (so the punishment of death overtook you) (p. 8r). Here, *'adhāb-e marg* (the punishment of death) translates *ṣā'iqat* (thunderbolt), and it is clear that the translation deviates from the conventional meaning of the word.

Another example occurs in the translation of the 104th verse of this Surah, where *rā'inā* is translated as "*guffār-ē bad*" (a bad word) (p. 12v). Further investigation reveals that this translation was influenced by explanations found in

Qur'ānic exegeses. For instance, Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī (1992/1371_{SH}, vol. 2, p. 90), a theologian of the 6th century AH, writes in his renowned work *Rawḍ al-Jinān wa Rawḥ al-Janān* that “Muslims used to address the Prophet by saying, ‘O Prophet of God, *rā'inā*,’ meaning ‘observe us, stand for us, listen to us and our speech.’ In Jewish tradition, however, this word is a curse.” This element seems to have been particularly challenging for translators, to the extent that in the *Qur'ān* translation commissioned by Nāder Šāh (Supplément Persan 1779, p. 7r), the translator opted for a zero-translation strategy, instead adding a note in the margin (Figure 5), perhaps to justify this approach:

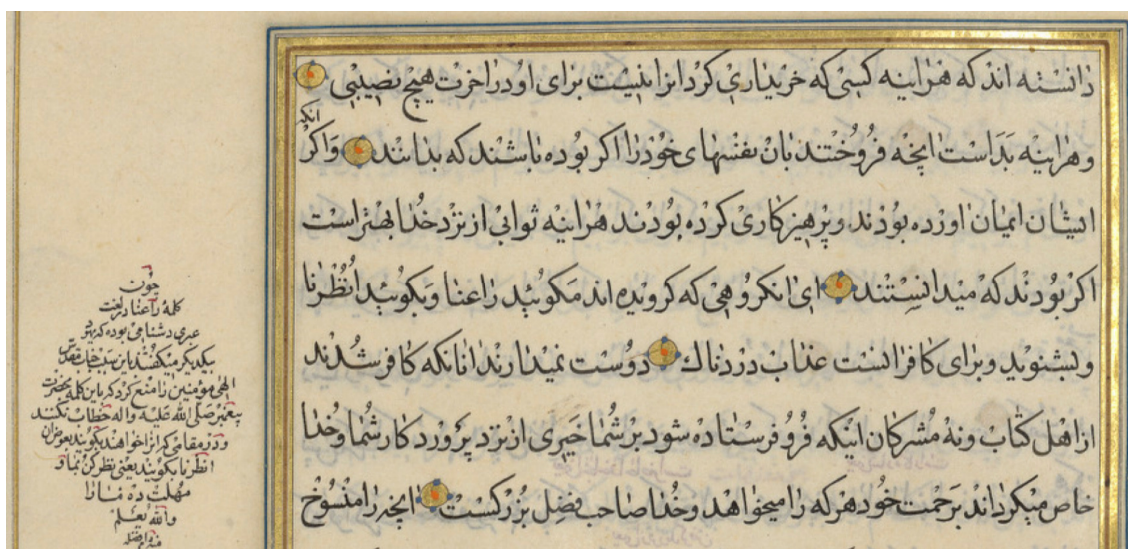


Figure 5. Supplément Persan 1779, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, p. 7r

A further example of exegetical translation can be seen in the translation of *lā a'lamu mā fī nafsika* (*Qur'ān* 5:116):

Naḍānam ānče dar 'ilm-e ḡayb-e waḥdāniyyat-e tō x'ādāy ast. (p. 73r)

Translation: I do not know what is in the Unseen Knowledge of Your, God, Oneness.

Here, the translator has rendered *nafs* (self) as *'ilm-e ḡhayb-e waḥdāniyyat* (the Unseen Knowledge of Oneness), likely to avoid attributing corporeal characteristics to God. This interpretation is consistent with the explanation provided by al-Fāxr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1999/1420, vol. 12, p. 466), who asserts that “there are

two issues regarding this verse ... the second being that those adhering to *taj̄sīm* (corporeality) relied on it, claiming that the verse suggests that God has a body.”

More instances of such anti-anthropomorphic renditions are cited and explained in my *History of Translation from Arabic into Persian* (forthcoming b, §4.4). Parallel instances of anti-anthropomorphic renditions can be found in Early Judaeo-Persian translations of the Hebrew Bible; where, for instance, the Bible says of God’s פני (“face”), the Persian version gives us שכינה (“presence”) (Shaked, 2008, p. 234). Comparable is, for instance, the Greek translation of the Bible’s תמונת (God’s “form”) to δόξα (“*xvarənah-*”) (Num 12:8; Tov, 1999, p. 267). To illustrate a contrasting technique, we turn to the (Aramaic) Targum, where abstract or less concrete depictions of God in the original Bible are rendered using more concrete imagery, fueling more anthropomorphic portrayals. This approach is evident in references to God as the father of Israel or as having “two” hands (where the source merely mentions “hands”) (Levine, 1988, pp. 48–49). The influence of the translator’s religious belief system on the translation process is also evident in the translator’s additions, discussed in the next section.

3.4.3. Translator’s Additions

Certain words and phrases in the translated passages should be regarded as the translator’s own additions, as they have no equivalent in the original Qur’ānic text. These additions are likely influenced by Qur’ānic exegeses or reflect the translator’s religious beliefs. The following passage offers useful insight into the translator’s religious background:

Qāla lan tarānī wa-lākini n̄zur ila l-ĵabali (Qur’ān 7:143)

Guft hargiz nabēnē ma-rā dar-ēn ĵehān walēkin ben(i)gar sōy-e kōh. (p. 95v)

Translation: He said, “You can never see me in this world, but look at the mountain.”

Here, the added phrase *dar-ēn ĵehān* (in this world) suggests that the translator most likely adhered to Aš‘arī theology, which posits that one can see God in the Hereafter. In contrast, Mu‘tazilī theology (see Abd al-Ĵabbār, 1965, pp. 232–260) denies the possibility of seeing God, both in this world and the next. The translator’s

addition emphasizes the possibility of seeing God, aligning with his theological perspective.

A selection of similar instances is provided below¹¹:

1. *Thumma stawā ila s-samā'i* (Qur'ān 2:29)

...¹² *āsmān-rā ba qudrat*. (p. 6v)

Translation: ... **in terms of power**.

In Fuṣṣilat (11), where the phrase reoccurs, it is rendered as “*āngah qaṣd kard farā āfarīdan-e āsmān*” (p. 262r), this time without the extra “*ba qudrat*” but with the addition of another exegetical element—“*āfarīdan*”—in translating *ilā* (for a possible justification of this inconsistency, see the Conclusion).

2. *Fa-in tanāza 'tum fi šai' in fa-ruddūhu ila llāhi wa-r-rasūli* (Qur'ān 4:59)

Agar ba xilāf oḥfēd andar čēz-ē bāz-hileδ (sic) *ān-rā sōy-e x"adāy u payāambar u ba kitāb u sunnat bāz-šawēδ*. (p. 51v)

Translation: if you should quarrel on anything, refer it to God and the Messenger **and refer to the Book and sunnat**.

This translation strongly suggests that the translator was likely Sunni, emphasizing the Qur'ān and Sunnah as the sources of authority.

3. *Al'āna wa-qad 'ašaita qablu wa-kunta mina l-mufsidīna* (Qur'ān 10:91)

Jibnīl guft ōy-rā aknūn imān āvardē nā-farmān būdē pēš az-ēn. (p. 121v)

Translation: **Gabriel told him**, “Now you believe, you were disobedient before.”

3.4.4. Over-Translation

In several cases, the adopted word-for-word translation method is abandoned, and the translator presents more than one word for a Qur'ānic term. These instances often involve hendiadyses, where the first element is sometimes of Arabic origin, while the second is typically Persian. For example, *muttaqīn* is rendered as “*pahrēz-kārān*”

11. The additions are made bold.

12. This section of the manuscript has faded and is unreadable.

o tars-kārān" (the abstaining and the fearing) (p. 9r), both of which are Persian terms. In other cases, such as "*ḥujjat-hā u rōšanī-hā*" (translating *al-bayyināt*) (p. 26v) and "*bēdāδ-kunān u kāfirān*" (translating *zālimīn*) (pp. 25v, 60r), one element is Arabic.

In some instances, the translator opts not for formal equivalence but rather translates words or phrases into larger chunks. For instance, *qaumi ṣ-ṣāliḥīna* (*Qur'ān* 5:84) is rendered as "*gurōh ki nēkān bāšand*" (p. 70r), whereas the formal equivalent would be *gurōh-e nēkān*. Similarly, "*baδ čēz-ē ast ki bad-ān bāz šawand*" (translating *bi's al-maṣīru*) (p. 42v) and "*ānān ki kitāb-hā-ye x^waδāy dārand*" (translating *aḥl al-kitāb*) (p. 45v) are examples of this phenomenon.

Such doublets (where the first element is sometimes of Arabic origin and the second typically Persian) in the translation under study represent an intermediate stage in the broader approach to Qur'ānic translation. While the earliest Persian translations exhibit a strong tendency to replace every Arabic word with one of Persian or Iranian origin, this effort diminishes over time as Arabic words become more prevalent in Persian. By the Mongol era, or at the latest the Safavid period, such translational practices are no longer evident. The use of doublets in this translation, therefore, aligns with the manuscript's date, corresponding to the period around the Mongol invasion.

3.4.5. "Overtly Erroneous Errors"

A contrastive analysis of this translation with the Qur'ānic text, along with comparisons to other Early New Persian Qur'ānic translations, reveals several cases of incorrect or inaccurate renditions. Some of these inaccuracies may be attributed to the slavish adherence to Arabic structures. For example, *rayābu 'an* (*Qur'ān* 2:130) is rendered as "*x^wāhaδ*" (he wants) (p. 14v), without accounting for the function of *'an*, which modifies the meaning of RIB. As Rāzī (1992/1371_{SH}, vol. 2, p. 174) explains, *rayiba fihi* means "he desired it," while *rayiba 'anhu* means "he turned

away from it."¹³

In another example, *allāhu* in the phrase *man yal'ani llāhu fa-lan tajīda lahū naṣīran* (*Qur'ān* 4:52) is mistakenly treated as the object of the sentence, resulting in the incorrect translation “*har ki nifrīn kunaδ x“aδāy-rā nayābē ōy rā yārmand-ē*” (he who curses God, you will not find for him any helper) (p. 51), when *allāhu* is actually the subject of the sentence.

Additionally, the translator misreads the source text in some instances. For example, *qaḍainā* (*Qur'ān* 34:14) is likely confused with *faḍḍalnā*, resulting in the incorrect translation *faḍl kardēm* (we bestowed favor) (p. 237r)

4. Conclusion

Codex Hudā'ī Efendī, Manuscript No. 20, dated 621_{AH}/1224, stands as one of the earliest pure and fully dated Persian translations of the *Qur'ān*. This study has introduced the manuscript and provided textual and translational analyses. The linguistic features in the translation are primarily associated with the ancient language of Central Iran, although some lexical items reflect influences from other regions of the Iranian plateau. A separate dialectological study by the present author (Bigdeloo, 2022) explored these regional lexical items, concluding that the dialectal features in the first one-fifth of the translation belong to the Central dialect of Early New Persian. In contrast, the remaining sections exhibit features of the Greater Khorasani dialect mixed with those of more standard New Persian. These stylistic and dialectal inconsistencies suggest possible plagiarisms in the translation. Further comparison with other early Khorasani Early New Persian translations of the *Qur'ān* confirmed these findings, identifying passages plagiarized from two earlier Persian translation-commentaries *Tāj al-Tarājīm* and *Tarjume-ye Tafsīr-e Ṭabarī*.¹⁴

13. *riybat kardan* + the preposition *az*, meaning “to turn away from”, which is recorded in some ENP texts, in all likelihood represents a calque of Arabic رغب ‘an.

14. As I have discussed this subject elsewhere, I will not rehash all the details here. It suffices to note that our translator closely follows *Tāj al-Tarājīm*, even where the latter employs

Several lexical items in the manuscript demonstrate direct continuity with Middle Persian, establishing a connection between the manuscript's language and its historical antecedents.

Phonologically, the text reveals non-standard forms, which likely reflect the time and region of the translator. Translationally, the manuscript follows a predominantly word-for-word approach, presenting Persian equivalents directly beneath their Arabic counterparts. However, deviations from this method are observed, including over-translation, transposition, and additions—likely influenced by Qur'ānic exegeses or the translator's personal beliefs.

The presence of incorrect or inaccurate translations suggests that the translator may have lacked a nuanced understanding of Arabic, occasionally resulting in interpretative errors. Despite these shortcomings, the Codex Hudā'ī Efendī provides invaluable insights into the linguistic, cultural, and translational practices of 13th-century Iran, marking it as a critical resource for future research.

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exegetical translation or adds explanatory elements. For instance, *sulṭānan naṣīran* (17:80) is rendered identically in both as "*sulṭānē nāṣir ya 'nī ḥujjātē zāhir*," including the explanatory phrase *ya 'nī ḥujjātē zāhir*. Likewise, *bi-a yuninā wa-waḥyinā* (11:37) is translated in both as "*bar hay'at-e sēna-ye murī*."

For plagiarism in early Persian authored and translated works, see *History of Translation from Arabic into Persian* (Bigdeloo, forthcoming b, §4.5). While some may prefer to avoid the term, others have acknowledged its occurrence in different ways. For instance, Omīdsālār (2002/1381_{SH}, pp. 386–388), when encountering clear cases of plagiarism—such as "*agar zabān-e ṭūṭī xušk kunand u xurd besāyand u kōdak bex'arad, faṣīḥ-zabān u dānā šawad*" → "*agar zabān-e ṭūṭī rā xušk kunad u xurd besāyad u ba kōdak dahad tā bex'arad, faṣīḥ-zabān u dānā šawad*"—chooses to describe them as "*'ebāratī rā bī kam o kāst naql kardan bedūn-e dhekr-e manba'-e xod or eqtebās kardan*, reserving the term *serqat-e adabī* exclusively for instances where an entire work has been plagiarized (p. 389). Given the broader meaning of the term plagiarism, it seems unwarranted to adopt such restrictive definitions.

§Translation Method. Gratitude is also extended to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback.

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