

A Critique of Murshid Zariri's *Shahnameh Nakkalan*

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Abstract

In recent years, the identification and correction of the Nakkali of *Shahnameh* scrolls have greatly impacted the view of *Shahnameh*-scholars toward the scrolls. The findings indicate that the Nakkali scrolls were not just a product of the mind and imagination of the bards; even in some cases, the scrolls date back to the pre-Islamic or, at times, the Islamic era preceding the compilation of the *Shahnameh*, by Hakim Abulqasem Ferdowsi. On the other hand, the corrected Nakkali scrolls differed in language and style from what the bards recited in a bardic assemblage. Consequently, the correction of the Nakkali scrolls should be done in a specialised manner and in accordance with the correct scientific standards so that the results could lead to a better understanding of the scrolls and their sources. Edited by Jalil Doostkhah and published in 1396 [2017], *Shahnameh Nakkalan* is among the best researched Nakkali *Shahnameh* scrolls. This article investigates *Shahnameh Nakkalan* from two perspectives: the first part will explore the mistakes and contradictions of the author, Murshid Zariri, and the second part conducts a thorough investigation of Jalil Doostkhah's editing methodology. This critique concludes that both the authorship and curation have been unfaithful to some sections.

Keywords: Scrolls, *Shahnameh*, Zariri, Correction, Criticism

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

In recent years, the identification and correction of the Nakkali *Shahnameh* scrolls have greatly impacted the view of *Shahnameh* scholars toward the

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scrolls. The findings indicate that the Nakkali scrolls were not just a product of the mind and imagination of the bards; even in some cases, the scrolls date back to the pre-Islamic or, at times, the Islamic era preceding the compilation of the *Shahnameh*, by Hakim Abulqasem Ferdowsi. On the other hand, the corrected Nakkali scrolls differed in language and style from what the bards recited in a bardic assemblage. Consequently, the correction of the Nakkali scrolls should be done in a specialised manner and in accordance with the correct scientific standards so that the results could lead to a better understanding of the scrolls and their sources. Generally, one can categorise Nakkali *Shahnameh* scrolls into “limited” and “extensive” scrolls. *Shahnameh Nakkalan* is an extensive scroll in folklore literature. Edited by Jalil Doostkhah and Printed by Qoqnoos Publishing in 1396 [2017], *Shahnameh Nakkalan* is compiled in five volumes. The original name of the book differs from the current title, which was chosen by the editor. The work suffers from editorial mistakes and shortcomings due to its voluminous size, lack of folklore dictionaries, and editorial misconceptions, all of which should be investigated in light of folklore textual pathology. Until now, two *Shahnameh*-scholars’ critiques have assessed *Shahnameh Nakkalan*. The first one is Mohammad Jafari’s “*Shahnameh Nakkalan: Dastan-ha-e Pahlavani Iranian dar Zanjireh-I az Ravayat-ha-e Sineh-be-Sineh va Sonnati*,” and the second one is Sajjad Aidenloo’s “*Ja’me-tarin Toomar-e Nakkali-e Shahnameh*.” Drawing upon their findings, we investigate other, academically fresh, parts of the book and their editing methodology.

2. Methodology

The present study employs library sources to investigate *Shahnameh Nakkalan* in light of authorship and editing quality.

3. Theoretical Framework

This article consists of two main parts; the first part investigates Murshid Zariri’s errors and inconsistencies; and the second part scrutinises Jalil Doostkhah’s editing methodology.

4. Discussion and Analysis

Regarding the Nakkali scrolls, although one can claim that the presence of certain narratives reinforces the possibility of the author/narrator’s access to ancient scripts, a thorough investigation of Murshid Zariri’s scroll proves otherwise. Zariri’s inability to conceive the true meaning of poems and his misleading dates and explications create a new narrative. By referring to

unreliable sources such as *Nasekh-al-Tavarikh*, *Zinat-al-Majales*, and *Jann'at-al-Kholoud*, Zariri inserts false information into the scroll. Another source is *Burhan-i Qati*, which, in isolation, is not a reliable source. In addition, there are numerous textual errors, some of which were identified by the editor. The authors of this article investigate other textual errors which were not identified by the editor.

Although inconsistencies and contradictions are not limited to folk literature and can be also found in canonical Persian masterpieces, due to the narrator's carelessness, forgetfulness, and delusory reliance on memory, the inconsistencies are more frequent in folk literature. Of note here is that multiple narrations are not necessarily contradictory; in other words, contradictions are inconsistencies within the elements of narration. This article investigates some of the contradictions in Murshid Zariri's work.

This study investigates editing errors in four categories: textual misinterpretation errors, textual misrecognition (subject) errors, vocabulary misconception and footnote errors, and redundant brackets due to misconceiving the text. In Murshid Abbas Zariri's *Shahnameh* Scrolls, there are numerous lines which, just like their prosaic counterpart, have inconsistencies and contradictions attributable to the editor.

5. Conclusion

This critique concludes that both the authorship and curation have damaged some sections. The authorship inconsistencies and contradictions include unoriginal narratives, falsified dates, unreliable sources, contradictory narrations, and carelessness. Likewise, the editing errors include textual misconceptions, erroneous notes, and errors in curation. To conclude, this study calls for a re-correction of the above-mentioned work in light of the contradictions and inconsistencies specified in this study.

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