

“Translator’s Invisibility”: Strategies of Adaptation in Persian Versions of Indian Tales from the Mughal Period

Anna Martin

Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Marburg

Introduction

Translation or, more generally, any sort of rewriting and adaptation, reflects reading practices of a specific audience at a certain period of time. Any decision taken by translators or their patrons such as selection of texts or choice of strategies¹ to deal with the whole text or its passages is made within the framework of the target system.² These decisions can be seen as “negotiations”³ with both the source and the target culture and can tell us more about the cultural or literary codes prevailing in the period we examine. Translations, adaptations and rewritings can thus serve as useful sources to study the history of reception of particular texts.

Fluency has been long considered to be one of the crucial criteria for judging translated texts, as demonstrated by the translator and scholar of translation studies Lawrence Venuti in his book *The Translator’s Invisibility*.⁴ As he puts it, “A translated

Anna Martin, “Translator’s Invisibility’: Strategies of Adaptation in Persian Versions of Indian Tales from the Mughal Period,” *Iran Namag*, Volume 2, Number 2 (Summer 2017), XXIV-XXXVII. **Anna Martin** <anna.martin@uni-marburg.de> is an Iranian Studies Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Marburg. Her research interests include translations from Indian languages into Persian, Indo-Persian Literature and Translation Studies.

text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers, and readers, when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text—the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the ‘original.’”

The cultural historian Peter Burke noticed that this feature often applies to early modern European works in general: “. . . the early modern culture of translation was one of relative freedom. Translators generally followed what Venuti calls the ‘fluent strategy’, the one that ‘domesticates the foreign text’, offering the reader ‘the narcissistic experience of recognizing his or her culture in a cultural other.’”⁵

Venuti examined translations of foreign literature into English from the seventeenth century to the present day. However, his considerations give food for thought on translation and text transfer as a whole and can serve as a foil for the analysis of the sixteenth—and seventeenth—century Persian versions of Indian texts.

Persian translations and in varying degrees also adaptations and rewritings of works in Sanskrit and other Indian languages were frequently done in Persianate South Asia approximately between the 13th and the 19th centuries. From early on, story collections were among the popular literary works considered for transmission into Persian. The process of adaptation and Persianization in the sense of addressing texts to specific audiences and adapting them to specific genre codes can be tracked in numerous Indo-Persian stories dating from the Mughal period. Here I am using the terms “adaptation” and “version” interchangeably in order to differentiate these

¹For a discussion of this term see John Kearns s.v. “strategy” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

²“System” is used according to Even-Zohar.

³Referring to Peter Burke, R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9: “Translation implies ‘negotiation’, a concept which has expanded its domain in the last generation, moving beyond the worlds of trade and diplomacy to refer to the exchange of ideas and the consequent modification of meanings.”

⁴The book was first published in 1995. It was revised in 2008. Lawrence Venuti,

The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008). As most theories on translation have been developed based on early modern and modern West-European textual material, it may be difficult to apply them to the analysis of non-European pre-modern or early modern literatures. However, the focus of theorists on translation has been recently shifting towards more attention paid to non-European literatures. See for example Martha P. Y. Cheung, ed., *An Anthology of Chinese Discourse on Translation: From Earliest Times to the Buddhist Project* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publications, 2006).

⁵Peter Burke, R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, 26.

from the term “translation” used in a narrower sense. Relying on George Bastin, adaptation is “a procedure employed to achieve an equivalence of situations wherever cultural mismatches are encountered.”⁶

Since Venuti’s reflections on the the visibility or invisibility of translators relate to early modern and modern works, the notion of an author or a translator he is using differs considerably from the reference works I am examining here. The *Adventures of King Vikrama* cannot be attributed to any author—none of the manuscripts mentions any names in this respect. We only find attribution to big names; in two of the four recensions we find the reference to the editors whose names however could not be dated to a certain period.⁷ The respective Persian versions do provide names of their translators/compilers; however, the borders between translation, adaptation and compiling may be blurred. In later versions, Persian antecedents are mentioned and the Indian sources are referred to. The extant Persian version of the famous Sanskrit story collection *Ocean of the Streams of Stories* dating back to the end of the 16th century is actually based on an earlier Persian rendering of the same work from the mid-15th century.

The fact that translations were valued according to their fluency and accuracy conceals translators’ interventions.⁸ This shortcoming applies to the Persian versions of Indian works, too, particularly at an early stage of Oriental studies when texts were often discredited due to their inaccuracy and therefore visibility of rewriting. For example, John Gilchrist dismissed these texts due to their deviation from the Indian ‘original’ in the following words: “Men at all conversant with the literature of India need hardly be informed, that most of the Persian translators of pure Hinduwee works have hitherto taken such unwarrantable freedoms with the originals, as almost to destroy the identity of the story in many of its essential parts”⁹ A remark made by William Jones regarding Persian adaptations of Indian works from the Mughal period which he disqualified as “a mixture of gloss and text with a flimsy paraphrase of both” was torn out of the context and widely quoted when referring to Indo-Persian text transfer in general.¹⁰

⁶George Bastin, “Adaptation,” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

⁷For a detailed discussion of the authorship of the work see Franklin Edgerton, ed./trans., *Vikrama’s Adventures or the Thirty-Two Tales of the Throne* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press 1926), lii.

⁸Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility*, 1.

⁹Quoted from Johannes Hertel, “Die Aḫlāq-ḫindī und ihre Quellen,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen*

Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 72 (1918): 66.

¹⁰“ . . . The Sangitaderpan, which he also names among his authorities, has been translated into Persian; but my experience justifies me in pronouncing that the Moghols have no idea of accurate translation, and give that name to a mixture of gloss and text with a flimsy paraphrase of both.” Sir William Jones: *The Works of Sir William Jones*. 6 vols. (London: printed for G. G. and J. R. Robinson and R. H. Evans, 1799, vol. I, 422-423).

The importance of Persian renderings of Indian texts as conveying the history of reception in a certain period was already underscored by Mujtabai and Ernst¹¹ and subsequently led to further studies on this subject. The Persian versions of Indian narratives are not only an important source for the study of pre-modern text transfer; they also constitute a vivid reflection of the shared literary cultures in South Asia.

In this paper, I want to take a closer look at how specific strategies of adaptation are reflected in two Mughal-period Persian texts related to Indian sources, namely *The Ocean of the Stream of Stories* and *King Vikrama's Adventures*. The first reference work, a Sanskrit collection of stories called *Kathāsaritsāgara* (the “Ocean of the Streams of Stories”),¹² is an anthology drawing on a hypothetical work called “The Long Story” *Bṛhatkathā*, which is not extant anymore.¹³ The *Kathāsaritsāgara* dates back to the 11th century and comprises 18 sections and 124 subsections denoted as “waves” (*taraṅga*).¹⁴ In the opening section, Pārvaṭī asks Śīva to tell her a charming tale that nobody had ever heard before. He tells her the adventures of the magician-Prince (*vidhyādhara*) Naravāhanadatta. This story is picked up by one of Śīva's attendants, Puṣpadanta, who passes it on to his wife. Punished for eavesdropping, Puṣpadanta and his companion Mālyavan who had intervened on his behalf, are cursed by Pārvaṭī to be reborn as mortals and to stay on earth until the whole tale of Naravāhanadatta's adventures, the main storyline, is proclaimed to be freed from the curse. The frame narrative includes various tales, some of which can also be encountered in other Indian works.

This collection of stories was transferred into Persian in Kashmir during the reign of Zayn al-‘Abidin (r. 1418/20-1470) under the name of *Bahr al-asmar*. Nowadays this

¹¹Fatullah Mujtabai, *Aspects of Hindu Muslim Cultural Relations* (New Delhi: National Book Bureau, 1978); Carl W. Ernst, “Muslim Studies of Hinduism? A Reconsideration of Arabic and Persian Translations from Indian Languages,” *Iranian Studies* 36, 2 (2003): 173-195.

¹²Somadeva, *The Kathāsaritsāgara of Somadevabhāta*, ed. Pandit Durgāprasād, Kāshināth Pāndurang Parab, revised by Wāsudev Laxmaṇ Shāstri Paṅsīkar (Bombay: The Niraya-Sagara Press, 1915, 1st ed. 1889). For a detailed discussion of the work see Jacobus Samuel Speyer, *Studies about the Kathāsaritsāgara*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1908; Wiesbaden: Sändig, 1968). Somadeva, trans. James Mallinson, *The Ocean of the Rivers of Story* (New York: New York University Press, 2007). For an

abridged English rendering of this work, see Arshia Sattar, *Tales from the Kathāsaritsāgara* (London: Penguin Books, 1994). See also Willem B. Bollé, *A Cultural Encyclopaedia of the Kathāsaritsāgara in Keywords: Complementary to Norman Penzer's General Index on Charles Tawney's Translation* (Halle a. d. Saale: Universitätsverlag Halle-Wittenberg, 2015).

¹³On the *Bṛhatkathā* see Speyer, *Studies about the Kathāsaritsāgara*, 27-60.

¹⁴According to Georg Bühler, “Über das Zeitalter des kasmīrischen Dichters Somadeva,” in *Sitzungsberichte der Philosophisch-Historischen Classe der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Wien: Rohrer, 1886), 545-558.; 558, the time-span of its composition can be set between 1063 and 1081.

version is not extant; it is known solely through the evidence from other sources. A likely reference to it can be found in the *Rājatarāṅginī* by Śrīvara (fl. 1459-1505). Śrīvara, the poet laureate at the court, refers to the commissioning of the translation of Sanskrit works into Persian and vice versa by his patron Zayn al-‘Abidin,¹⁵ among them a translation of “a digest of the *Bṛhatkathā*” (*bṛhatkathāsāra*) which may refer to the *Kathāsaritsāgara*.

Another Persian version was commissioned in the second half of the 16th century during the Akbar’s reign and accomplished by a certain Mustafa Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi also known as the translator of other works.¹⁶ This work was presumably carried out after after 1590 following the military annexation of Kashmir.¹⁷ In conformity with the Sanskrit text, the Persian adaptation is likewise divided into eighteen main chapters, called *nahr* (rivers), each subdivided into several *mauj* (waves).¹⁸

The second text, *The Adventures of Vikrama*, or, *The Thirty-Two [Tales] of the Lion-Throne*, is a Sanskrit narrative cycle presumably written down in the early 14th century.¹⁹ It is a collection of 32 stories about the heroic deeds of the semi-historical Indian king Vikramāditya. This work is commonly available in several different Sanskrit recensions.²⁰ Furthermore, it was disseminated in various Indian regional literary languages and was adapted outside of the Indian culture region several times.²¹ The broad dissemination of these stories testified by numerous versions in different languages serve as a proof of their popularity. Several other Indian sources also tell of the heroic deeds of the semi-historical king Vikrama, Vikramārka or Vikramāditya, who embodies an ideal type of ruler.²²

¹⁵Walter Slaje, “Kaschmir im Mittelalter und die Quellen der Geschichtswissenschaft,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 48, 1 (2005): 23.

¹⁶Namely a Jain redaction of the *Pañcatantra* into Persian as *Panchakhiyan* and a Persian version of the *Kitab al-milal wa al-nihal* of al-Shahrastani.

¹⁷Heike Franke, “Akbar’s Kathāsaritsāgara: The Translator and Illustrations of an Imperial Manuscript,” *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 313–356, 321-322.

¹⁸Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, Mustafa, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi katasaritsagar*, ed. Tara Chand, Sayyid Amir Hasan ‘Abidi (New Delhi: Aligarh Muslim University and Markaz-i tahqiqat-i farsi, Rayzan-i farhangi-yi sifarat-i jumhuri-yi islami-yi Iran, 1997).

¹⁹For the discussion on the date of this work see

Sternbach 1974, 237-241. ²⁰Franklin Edgerton, ed./trans., *Vikrama’s Adventures or the Thirty-Two Tales of the Throne* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926). A more recent translation of one of its recensions is Judit Törzsök, *Friendly Advice by Nārāyaṇa & King Vikrama’s Adventures* (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

²¹For a Mongolian version see Charles R. Bawden, ed./trans., *Tales of King Vikramāditya and the Thirty-Two Wooden Men* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1960).

²²*Vikramārka* or *vikramāditya* (“sun of valour”) has been increasingly used as an epithet since the Gupta dynasty. As the title of several Gupta rulers it has also been used as an honorary title in later dynasties.

The story tells about an enchanted throne given by Indra as a gift to King Vikrama. After the latter dies, the throne supported by thirty-two statuettes is buried because nobody is found to be a suitable candidate to replace Vikrama. A later king Bhoja of Dhārā discovers the throne and takes it to his capital. Each time Bhoja seeks to mount the throne, he is hindered by one of the statues which points out that only a man whose virtues are similar to Vikrama's is able to mount the throne and tells a story of the deeds of Vikrama. In the end, all 32 stories are told and the statues enchanted by Indra are released.

This cycle of stories was translated into Persian several times. The first Persian translation of this narrative cycle seems to be commissioned by Akbar in 1574. The regency of the ruler Akbar (1556-1605) is commonly referred to as the heyday of translation activities. The *Adventures of Vikrama* was among the early translations of this period. It was done by an Indian assistant and written down in Persian bearing the title of *Namah-'i Khirad'afza* (the wisdom-enhancing book) by Bada'uni, who later edited that rendering in 1581.²³ This version seems not to be extant anymore, however. Also during the time of Akbar, Chaturbhujdas b. Mihrchand, a *kāyastha* of Sonpat accomplished another rendering of that work.²⁴ We do not know whether Chaturbhujdas and Bada'uni were aware of their respective works. During the reign of Jahangir (1605-1627), another version titled *Singhasanbattisi*²⁵ and attributed to Bharamalla b. Archamalla *khatiri* appeared in 1610 A.D.²⁶ Later Ibn Harkarn²⁷ prepared another version using the works of his predecessors in 1651-52 A.D. Ibn Harkarn himself points out, that he used the two earlier Persian Vikrama-stories by Chaturbhujdas and Bharamalla for his draft. He wrote that these two stories differed from each other, and that he had reviewed and arranged them:

“The lowest Ibn Harkaran kayath noticed that the book *Singhasanbattisi* was very popular in the Indian language, and that it had already been translated into Persian during the regency of Jalal al-Din Muhammad Akbar by Khvaja Chaturbhuj bin Mihrchand

²³This is mentioned in the *Muntakhab al-tavarikh*, trans W. H. Lowe, vol. 2 (Karimsons, 1976, 1st ed. Calcutta, 1895-1899).

²⁴A manuscript of the *Shahnamah* of Chaturbhujdas is kept at the Bodleian Library, Oxford University; see Eduard Sachau, Hermann Ethé, *Catalogue of the Persian, Turkish, Hindustani and Pushto Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,

1889) vol. 1, 815, no. 1324. ²⁵“The twenty-two [tales] of the lion-throne”.

²⁶See Wilhelm Pertsch, *Verzeichniss der Persischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Berlin: Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1888), 1034-1035 and Hermann Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1937), 1106-1107.

Kayat from the town of Sonpat. Bharimal [sic] ibn Rajmal Khatri did a translation during the regency of Nur al-Din Muhammad Jahangir. Both *Singhasanbattisi* differed from each other, and [stories] had been moved without motivation, which resulted in a disrupted narrative. Therefore he reviewed both copies, collated a selection, and rearranged the book in the right order.”²⁸

Another translator/compiler named Kishandas b. Malukchand-i Tanbuli²⁹ from Lahore also used previous Persian Vikrama stories to compose his version. Over the years, up to the days of British colonial rule, several other Persian versions followed, all of which have never been edited or researched to this day.³⁰ The first translation of this work into a European language was also done from a Persian version.³¹

The Vikrama-stories and the *Ocean of the Streams of Stories* are examples of the popularity which Indian narrative literature enjoyed during the Mughal Era. While the Vikrama cycle of stories can be seen as one of the many examples of didactic though entertaining prose, the *Ocean of the Streams of Stories* is of a less didactic concern. On the structural level, both of them present a main story and many smaller narratives interwoven within it. This typical Indian narrative was very popular in the Persianate world and collections of stories attracted the attention of patrons from a very early age on. These works also included elements found in Persian wisdom literature linked to the issues of conduct and ethical behavior for the rulers and as well in a wider sense.³²

In contrast to other examples from that kind of literature like Abu al-Ma‘ali Nasrullah Munshi’s *Kalila va Dimna*, the Persian Vikrama stories as well as the *Darya-yi asmar* were retold not in artificial prose (*nasr-i musajja‘*) aimed at connoisseurs

²⁷See Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature* (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1995), s. v. “Bishop Rai b. Har Karan”. The name of this author is spelled differently in various sources. See Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, 1881), 763.

²⁸The translation is my own. BL Add. 6597, fol. 2b: *Chun . . . har du singhasanbattisi miyan-i yikdigar mukhtalif va az naql kardan ja ba ja na-marbut shudah bud bana bar an har du nuskhah ra mulahiza dashtah intikhab sakhtah va pardakhtah kitab ra az sar-i nau tartib namudah murattab sakhtah . . .*

²⁹See Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian*

Literature, s.v. “Kishan Das b. Maluk Chand.”

³⁰My forthcoming dissertation deals with them in detail. Anna Martin, “Vikramāditya als Ġavānmard? Übersetzung als kultureller Transfer am Beispiel des *Kišanbilās* von Kišandās b. Malūkčand-i Lahūrī anhand eines Vergleichs mit den Sanskritrezensionen der *Siḥāsānadvātrīṃśatikā*” (PhD diss., Marburg, 2015). The printed Urdu versions have been analyzed by Frances Pritchett, *Marvelous Encounters: Folk Romance in Urdu and Hindi* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1985).

³¹Daniel Lescallier, *Le Trône enchanté: Conte indien traduit du persan par M. le baron Lescallier*. (New York: J. Desnoues, 1817).

³²Ernst, “Muslim Studies of Hinduism?”, 180.

but rather in simple prose with features that remind of an oral recital. The *Kishanbilas'* opening section refers to “narrators” (*raviyan chunin avardah'and*)³³ and thus constitutes a link to the tradition of Persianate storytelling. The 32 stories told by the statuettes each start with formula like “thus it has been passed down” (*chunin avardah'and*). We find numerous examples of such formulaic expression throughout the text. All characters and locations are stereotypical and adhere to narrative conventions. Within the genre codes of Persian narrative prose, magic is an integral part of Persianate *qissa* and *dastan* works. The magic in the Vikrama stories responds to the expectations the audience has from the genre of narrative literature including strange and wondrous things (*'ajayib*).³⁴

Now I would like to turn to the examination of the Persian versions of these two texts and show what they can tell us about the strategies of adaptation. Noteworthy, these strategies can also vary within one single text. In both Persian narratives we encounter a mix of adaptation techniques: some sections display a transfer close to an Indian version, whereas most parts indicate a more narrative approach. This means that special attention was given to the transmission of the narrated story and not to the preservation of as many textual features as possible. Regarding the “text-internal” factors, we can conclude that the aim of the translator-editors was not to preserve the essential textual attributes but to adapt the text according to specific conventions. At a structural level, the Persian renderings of both show an orientation towards the Sanskrit versions: most notably, the structure of a certain number of tales within a story framework is maintained and the stories follow the thread of the narrative. The Persian Vikrama cycle also follows the structural features of the Sanskrit recensions.

If we closer examine the introductions to the Persian versions, we immediately notice that these are modelled following the Islamicate literary conventions. The southern Sanskrit recension of the Vikrama stories begins with the invocation of Gaṇeśa, which is meant to ensure success in literary work or in any other enterprise, and three further editions begin with different verses, whereas the Persian version of Kishandas starts with the *basmala* followed by verses praising God and verses are addressed to the governing ruler, which corresponds to the convention of Persian premodern literature.³⁵ The beginning of the Persian *Kathāsaritsāgara*, however, is closer to the Indian version, paraphrasing Somadeva’s introduction.

³³Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. orient quart 257, fol. 2b.

³⁴Pritchett, *Marvelous Encounters*, 9.

³⁵Note the reverse in the Sanskrit adaptation

of Jāmi’s *Yusuf-u Zulaykha* rendered as *Kathākaṭukam* by the Kashmirian poet Śrīvara in 1505: “Śrīvara is faithful to Jāmi’s original, but makes two significant changes: The two

One of the techniques applied in the *Ocean of the Stream of Stories* is the use of explanations and glosses to single words that refer to persons, objects or concepts. The translator-compiler ‘Abbasi remarks, for example, that “this story is elaborated upon in [other] Indian books,” or comments on certain passages by adding: “. . . according to the sayings of the people of India . . .” Another addition is included in the following: “Shiva then replied, ‘Long ago, O goddess, you and many other daughters were born to the Prajāpati Daksha’”³⁶ reads in Persian: “During this existence, many daughters were born to the Prajāpati Daksha, who according to the belief of the people of India, is one of the reasons of the existence of the world (*dachhah parjapat ki yaki az ‘illat ‘ha-yi hasti-yi ‘alam ast bi-qavl-i ahl-i hind . . .*).”³⁷

Certain concepts such as *yajña* are explained, which in this context denotes “worship of a deity, act of worship or devotional act in general, any offering or oblation”³⁸ as “*jag* which is a specific act of worship . . .” or *piśāca* (a class of demons) is explained as “*bishachi* which is a type of inferior celestial being . . .” The Sanskrit “I shall tell you about the adventures of the sorcerers,”³⁹ reads in the *Darya-yi asmar*: “I will tell you the story of the Vidyādharas who are a specimen of deity (*hikayat-i bidyadaram ra ki nau ‘i az devta ‘ha ‘and*).”

Where the *Kathāsaritsāgara* reads: “When Shiva said this, Parvati replied, “How could I have been your wife before?” the *Darya-yi asmar* adds an explanation: “Parvati said: ‘How could I have been your wife before in my previous birth—hat means by transmigration of the soul (*dar nisha-yi sabiq ya ‘ni bi- tariq-i tanasukh*)?’”

We also encounter further explanations of certain passages in the Sanskrit text, as in the following passage that tells how Śiva killed a demon. The Sanskrit version reads: “By casting his spear (*śūla*) upon the heart of the *asura* lord Andhaka, who was one, it was, wonderful to relate, withdrawn from the hearts of everyone in the three worlds.”⁴⁰ In the *Darya-yi asmar*, this passage is transferred as follows:

introductory chapters of the Persian original are devoted to the praise of the Prophet Muḥammad and his miraculous journey to heaven. Śrīvara, on the other hand, praises Śiva in the first and the last cantos of his composition. At the end of the Persian original, Zulaikha’s youth and beauty are restored by Angel Gabriel. In the Sanskrit version, it is Śiva who rejuvenates Zulaikha and reunites her with Yusuf.” Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, “From Yāvani to Samskr̥tam: Sanskrit Writings Inspired by Persian Works,” in *Studies in the History of*

Indian Thought, 14 (2002), 83.

³⁶Mallinson, *The Ocean of the Rivers of Story*, 36.

³⁷Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi katasaritsagar*, 9.

³⁸Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v. “*yajña*”.

³⁹Mallinson, *The Ocean of the Rivers of Story*, 10.

⁴⁰Mallinson, *The Ocean of the Rivers of Story*, 35.

“Among the extraordinary tasks of Mahādev [i.e. Śīva] was that he drove the *tirsul*, which is a famous weapon and which is also called *sul*, into the chest of Andak Dēt, so that the *sul*, which means pain, was removed from the people. The meaning [of this phrase] is that by killing [the demon], he freed the people from suffering.”⁴¹

In the *King Vikrama's Adventures*, Kishandas, the translator-compiler of a version from the mid-17th century named *Kishanbilas* uses a slightly different lexicon including Hindavī words throughout the Persian text.⁴² Abidi and Gargesh demonstrate that at a certain point Persian got acculturated as one of the many literary languages in this multilingual region. According to Abidi and Gargesh, “The Indianization of Persian is manifested not only through a large-scale borrowing of words from Indian languages . . . ,” but we also “find numerous instances of code mixing and code switching, of hybrid expressions and of semantic shift in the lexicon.”⁴³ This Indo-Persian lexicon is also reflected in the later Persian rewritings drawn on Indian texts.

The second type of strategy encountered in both texts is the replacement or addition of poetic quotations. As any text is made up of allusions, quotations or reminiscences that refer to other texts within a particular cultural system, intertextuality may be an issue when dealing with rewriting. When it comes to text transfer, the handling of quotations, allusions, and references to text corpora can be seen as a challenge for the translator since these are linked to certain literary traditions, which makes it even more difficult to use them as set pieces in a translation.

Each different recension of the Sanskrit versions of *King Vikrama's Adventures* includes many intertextual references in the form of allusions to and quotations from different Indian sources such as poetry (*kāvya*), ‘epics’ (*itihāsa*), narratives (*kathā*), juridical literature (*dharmaśāstra*), different collections of ‘Cānakya’s maxims’ and the like.⁴⁴ In the Persian versions, these references are either dropped or replaced. Only in some

⁴¹Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi katasaritsagar*, 8.

⁴²*phal* (Hindi: *phal*) for fruit, *banjarah* from Hindi: *banjārā*: nomadic grocer, *mahajan* and *sahu* for merchant (Hindi: *mahājan* and *sāhūkār* denotes a moneylender), *bira* for a prepared beateel-leaf (Hindi: *bīrā*), *bansi* for a fishing-hook (Hindi: *bañsī*), to name only very few examples.

⁴³S. A. H. Abidi, Ravinder Gargesh, “Persian in South Asia,” in *Language in South Asia*,

ed. Braj B. Kachru, Yamuna Kachru, and S. N. Sridhar (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 103-120.

⁴⁴Ludwik Sternbach, *The Kāvya-Portions in the Kathā-Literature: Pañcatantra, Hitopadeśa, Vikramacarita, Vetalapañcavimsatikā and Śukasaptati: an Analysis* (Delhi: Meharchand Lachhmandas, 1974), 245-255 identified in the recensions of the text edited by Edgerton, *Vikrama's Adventures*, 707 different stanzas.

rare cases they are paraphrased. One finds verses taken from the pool of Classical Persian poetry instead, for example from the *Gulistan*⁴⁵ and *Bustan*⁴⁶ of Sa‘di, from the *Tutinamah* of Nakhshabi,⁴⁷ the *Sharafnamah* of Nizami,⁴⁸ verses from the *Divan* of Badr al-Din Hilali Astarabadi Cagata’i⁴⁹ and from Hafiz.⁵⁰ One can also find idioms or simple memory verses from the moral Vademecum called *Pandnama*, or, *Karima*, which were mainly used for teaching Persian language in South Asia.⁵¹ The question arises whether the verses in the Persian Vikrama stories can give evidence regarding the context of reception the stories were adapted to. The omission or replacement of verses show the translator’s approach to the adaption of a text to the target system.

In the *Ocean of the Streams of Stories* we encounter the same strategy of inserting poetic quotations from the pool of Persian poetry. It is worth mentioning here that today only two manuscripts of the Persian version are available; both are incomplete and contain only 8 out of the original 18 chapters of the Sanskrit version each, which Chand and ‘Abidi based their edition upon.⁵² In every chapter we find a number of poetic references. As J. S. Meisami pointed out, the effect of a narrative arises from the interaction of verse and prose: “The complementary relationship between the affective quality of poetry . . . and the demands of prose, in which the information conveyed must be grasped, works to produce a total effect in which each illuminates the other. The authority of poetry as poetry based on both its affective quality and on its status as the highest form of eloquence.”⁵³ The Persian rendering quotes from various sources such as *Gulistan*,⁵⁴ *Divan-i Hafiz*,⁵⁵ *Divan-i Salman-i Savaji*,⁵⁶ *Manzum-at-i Sharaf al-Din Yazdi*,⁵⁷ Nizami’s *Khusrau-u-Shirin*,⁵⁸ *Makhzan al-asrar*,⁵⁹ *Haft paykar*,⁶⁰ and various others.

⁴⁵Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. orient quart 257, foll. 62a-b, 99a-b, 114b, 143b-144a.

⁴⁶Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, fol. 111b.

⁴⁷Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, foll. 10a, 13a, 90b, 102a.

⁴⁸Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, foll. 95b, 103a, 134a.

⁴⁹Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, foll. 118a, 118b.

⁵⁰Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin fol. 122a.

⁵¹It was wrongly attributed to Sa‘di, see De Foucheour 2009, 145.

⁵²The Manuscripts are stored in the State Central Library of Hyderabad and the India Office Collection, London. See Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi kataritsagar*, Introduction, 8.

⁵³Julie Scott Meisami, “Mixed Prose and Verse in Medieval Persian Literature,” in

Prosimetrum: Crosscultural Perspectives on Narrative in Prose and Verse, ed. Joseph Harris, Karl Reichl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 295-319.

⁵⁴Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi kataritsagar*, 19, 21.

⁵⁵Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi kataritsagar*, 52.

⁵⁶Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi kataritsagar*, 37.

⁵⁷Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi kataritsagar*, 21.

⁵⁸Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi kataritsagar*, 27.

⁵⁹Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi kataritsagar*, 39.

⁶⁰Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi kataritsagar*, 40.

Comparing these poetic references in the sense of a functionally oriented understanding of translation, one can speak of a dynamic equivalence or of a situational analogy: although the wording is totally different, this ‘affective quality’ is the same—in both Persian works we encounter a common or at least an expected type of poetic allusions due to the respective literary conventions, an approach which may be called cultural or literary adaptation,⁶¹ in other words “Persianization.” Cultural adaptation also transforms the Indian king Vikrama into a *javanmard*-type Persian counterpart. The term *javanmard*, as its Arabic equivalent *fata* (both literally meaning “young man”) was linked to ethical qualities such as valour, magnanimity and courage in the Persianate world: “With the wide range of activities and perspectives associated with futuwwat and jawanmardi in the Arabic and Persian worlds it is difficult to offer a watertight definition for the term. However, a common theme is sodality, in which there was a commitment to loyalty among those who shared the same values and lifestyle, and the promotion of certain ethical considerations such as courage, bravery and selflessness.”⁶² *Javanmardi* was thus also linked to other Persianate concepts of ideal behavior such as *adab*.⁶³ King Vikrama is described in Persian as surpassing even Hatam-i Ta’i,⁶⁴ whose magnanimity allowed to regard him as an ideal *javanmard*. The Persian Vikrama is described as possessing the qualities of munificence (*sakhavat*) and courage (*shuja’at*) which also apply to ‘Ali in the *javanmardi* context. Some manuscripts explicitly mention the term *javanmard* in relation to Vikrama. Ibn Harkam in his introduction to his version of the Vikrama stories mentions the increase of munificence (*sakhavat*) and courage (*shuja’at*) as motivation for his work.

Indian Narratives like the Vikrama cycle, “a manual of worldly morals”⁶⁵ to which the generic term *nitiśāstra* applies, did certainly fulfill the existing need for educational and didactic prose in an entertaining guise in the target culture.⁶⁶ This feature—the

⁶¹Burke, in *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, points out that “the term ‘cultural translation’ was originally coined by anthropologists in the circle of Edward Evans-Pritchard, to describe what happens in cultural encounters when each side tries to make sense of the action of the other,” 8.

⁶²Lloyd Ridgeon, *Jawanmardi: a Sufi Code of Honour* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2011), 1-2.

⁶³Arley Loewen, “Proper Conduct (Adab) Is Everything: The Futuwwat-nāmah-i Sultāni of Husayn Va’iz-i Kashifi,” *Iranian Studies* 36, 4 (2003): 543-570.

⁶⁴Hatam-i Ta’i is a type of pre-Islamic Arabic hero figure excelling through attributes like hospitality and generosity. A series of stories which tell of his adventures (*Hatamnamah*), has also been popular on the Indian subcontinent during the 17th and 18th centuries.

⁶⁵Sternbach, *The Kāvya-Portions in the Kathā-Literature*, 242.

⁶⁶Ulrich Marzolph, “The Migration of Didactic Narratives Across Religious Boundaries,” in *Didaktisches Erzählen: Formen literarischer Belehrung in Orient und Okzident*, ed. Regula Forster, Romy Günthart (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 2010).

combination of stories with a didactic purpose—is emphasized in many Persian works, for example, in Kāshifis *Royal Book of Spiritual Chivalry (Futuvvatnamah 'i sultani)*.⁶⁷

Let it be known that narrating and hearing tales has many advantages. First is that one becomes aware of the condition of the ancient. Second is that when one hears of strange and wondrous [things] his eyes are opened to the divine power. Third is that when one hears about the trials and tribulations of the ancients he finds comfort in understanding that no one has been free of the chains of sorrow. Fourth is that when he hears about the perishing of the realm and the riches of the ancient kings, he withdraws his heart from worldly goods and the world [itself], learning that [this world] has never been nor will it ever be faithful to anyone. . . . It thus is evident that there are benefits in the tales of the ancients.⁶⁸

The Vikrama-stories fitted into this genre expectation and the transferring of Vikrama into a *javanmard*-type can be seen as an orientation towards character conventions of Persianate storytelling.

Generally speaking, we can see that what is referred to as *tarjuma* (translation, transferring) often entails several other techniques such as compiling, rewriting and working upon older versions of a text. The translator-editors (if they did, at all) described their procedure in diverse ways, mostly using vague terms as “brought from the Indian language into the Persian.” In some rare cases, the approach is elaborated upon in prefaces or epilogues of translated works. In the preface of the *Ocean of the Streams of Stories*, ‘Abbasi mentions that he was assigned to rewrite an earlier version “of the book *barhatkata* . . . which the Kashmirian Brahmin Sumdevbat . . . had shortened” and which “someone had undertaken during Zayn al-‘Abidin’s reign,” being fraught with Arabic expressions, in a more readable style.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷Vā‘iz Kashifi, *Futuvvatnamah-'i sultani*, ed. Muhammad J. Mahjub (Tihiran: Bunyad-i Farhang, 1971), Vā‘iz Kashifī, *The Royal Book of Spiritual Chivalry*, trans. Jay R. Crook (Chicago: Great Books of the Islamic World, 2000).

Quoted from Mahmood Omidasalar, ⁶⁸“Storytellers in Classical Persian Texts,” *Journal of American Folklore* 97, 384 (1984): 207. ⁶⁹Khaliqdad ‘Abbasi, *Darya-yi asmar tarjuma-yi katasaritsagar*, 4.

Kishandās also mentions the works of his predecessors which he used in rendering the *King Vikrama's Adventures*. Obviously, “translators” acted also as editors as they integrated tales from other Vikrama cycles or from older versions of Persian Vikrama tales. It is also a generic question. Since narrative literature frequently has compilative character, it is particularly well-suited for the integration of the material from different sources. Translators of story collections may thus have been particularly inclined to transfer selectively and thereby act as compilers as well. These translator-compilers of Persian narrative works often processed their source material selectively and at their own discretion. It remains unclear what those translator-editors thought about their own approach and whether the integration of older versions was seen as a part of the *tarjuma* concept.

The strategy of glossing, commenting or explaining words, encountered in the *Darya-yi asmar*, can be seen as an example of a “negotiation” with a foreign text, or, if we get back to the initial term, a kind of “translators’ interventions.” The “Persianization” of Indic narratives through the replacement of poetic quotations and cultural adaptation, however, can be seen as an attempt to situate the text in a frame suitable for the dominant values of the target system, in other words, to conceal the adaptation activity. This attempt is the main feature of both texts. This feature may have been a part of a broader strategy affecting Indo-Persian adaptation activities as a whole; however one has to take into account a much larger body of data. Through analyzing various texts integrated into the Persianate canon of knowledge and literature, we can get a step closer to the reconstruction of translational norms and better understanding of a broader Indo-Persian adaptation strategy.