A Story of Conquest and Adventure

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The present translation of the *Large Farāmarznāme* (Farāmarznāme-ye bozorg) is based on the critical edition of the text, which was published in March 2016 (Tehran: Sokhan). This edition resulted from a cooperation between myself and Dr Abolfazl Khatibi. Whilst I took the first steps by transcribing and collating the three texts upon which the edition is based, Dr Khatibi made the painstaking efforts of re-editing my rough first version, correcting all my mistakes and making the necessary emendations to the text, translating my notes to the text from English into Persian and checking and re-checking the final version before its publication.

The plan to compile the critical edition, and subsequently its translation, sprang from my doctoral research, which was part of a larger project, funded by NWO (the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research), led by Dr Gabrielle van den Berg and dealing with ‘the Persian epic cycle’ or ‘the later epics’, a collective term for poems that were written in emulation of Ferdowsi’s *Shāhnāme* between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. The project’s main aim was to pay attention to this, until then largely neglected, corpus of literary works and to shed light on the circulation and reception of the later epics, both as separate entities and in connection with the *Shāhnāme*. My own research focused on the traditions surrounding a son of the famous hero Rostam, Farāmarz. This warrior is the protagonist of two later epics that are entitled *Farāmarznāme*, the longer one – of the present translation – exceeding the shorter one by some 3.5 times in length, as well as differing completely in content. Farāmarz in addition appears in six other later epics, which means that he plays an important role in the narrative traditions that derived from the *Shāhnāme*.

Whilst the later epics, with regard to subject matter and use of language, clearly have their roots in the *Shāhnāme*, they at the same time represent a new narrative genre: the poems each centre on one main hero and they tend to include many romantic elements such as love stories, distant voyages, fantastic creatures and other marvels. Both the appeal of this genre to
contemporary audiences and its close connection to Ferdowsi’s epic caused the \textit{Shahname} tradition, in terms of its contents and context, to change with the times and as a consequence retain its popularity, in oral and written form, throughout the centuries. Testimony to the appeal of the later epics is the occurrence of many of these poems as interpolations in a large number of \textit{Shahname} manuscripts. Therefore, for research on the textual traditions and the reception of the \textit{Shahname} it is important that the later epics are taken into account. In order for this to be possible, these poems need to be widely accessible. For this reason, as no printed text of the \textit{Large Far\'ar\'marzn\'name} existed at that time, I felt it was necessary for a critical edition of the poem to be compiled, as well as for an English translation of the text to be published, in order for this later epic to gain a wider audience.

I would like to thank Dr Asghar Seyed-Gohrab for his time and effort in reading my text and helping me solve certain translation problems, as well as for his valuable additional suggestions. Any errors that remain in the translation or in the footnotes are all mine.

\textbf{A Note on the Transcription of Persian Names}

The transcription of Persian words follows a basic system. Short vowels are represented as \(a\), \(e\) and \(o\), long ones as \(\dot{a}\), \(i\) and \(\dot{u}\) and diphthongs as \(ey\) and \(ow\), whilst a final \textit{h\'a-ye hawwaz} appears as \(\dot{e}\). Consonants are rendered with a minimal use of diacritical signs, which thus gives \(j\) (\(\mathbb{j}\)), \(ch\) (\(\mathbb{c}\)), \(kh\) (\(\mathbb{c}\)), \(zh\) (\(\mathbb{z}\)), \(sh\) (\(\mathbb{s}\)), \(gh\) (\(\mathbb{g}\)) and \(q\) (\(\mathbb{g}\)). The usual distinction has been made between \(h\) (\(\dot{h}\)) and \(\dot{h}\) (\(\mathbb{h}\)), or \(t\) (\(\dot{t}\)) and \(\dot{t}\) (\(\mathbb{t}\)), whilst the various \(s\)'s and \(z\)'s are transcribed as: \(s\) (\(\mathbb{t}\)), \(s\) (\(\mathbb{c}\)), \(s\) (\(\mathbb{c}\)), \(\dot{z}\) (\(\mathbb{d}\)), \(z\) (\(\mathbb{z}\)), \(\dot{z}\) (\(\mathbb{d}\)) and \(\mathbb{z}\). (\(\mathbb{z}\)).

\textbf{A Note on the Translation}

Firstly, it should be noted that the Persian text of the \textit{Large Far\'ar\'marzn\'name} as it appears in the critical edition is not ideal, since it has been compiled on the basis of three texts which each have their faults (see the Introduction: The Text of the \textit{Large Far\'ar\'marzn\'name}). As a result of this, several verses in the edition contain uncertain readings or are difficult to interpret correctly, so that the translation in places remains open for reinterpretation. Secondly, the present translation takes account of a number of alterations – fourteen in all – that ought to be made to the published Persian text, in order for the verses
in question to make more sense. These emendations were proposed to me by Abolfazl Khatibi on the basis of a longer list of suggestions drawn up by Sajjād Āydenlū in his meticulous review of the edition of the Farāmarznāme-ye bozorg. The proposed alterations to the critical edition in the main consist of changing the reading from the one that was originally chosen by the editors to one of the texts cited in the footnotes, whilst in a few other cases a certain word or phrase should be reinterpreted, because the reading in all three texts that were used for the compilation of the edition seems incorrect. These alterations concern the following verses: 111, 734, 822, 1566, 2248, 2560, 2876, 2905, 2906, 3124, 4001, 4480, 4525 and 4560. Reference to these changes to the text is made in the Notes to the Translation.