

VARIANT READINGS IN FOCUS: SELECTING THE WORD ŠĀ‘AT FROM THE AUTOGRAPH PATNA 533 (*HAŠT BIHIŠT VI*)*

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İdrīs Bidlīsī’s *Hašt Bihišt* (“The Eight Paradises”) chronicles the reigns of the first eight Ottoman sultans, ending with Bāyezīd II (1481–1512), whom the author served as an administrator. Book VI of this wide political history deals with the reign of Sultan Murād II (1421–1444, 1446–1451). This brief note provides a discussion on a difficult passage given in introductory chapters of Book VI. It is especially useful for those who might be interested in a critical edition of Bidlīsī’s unpublished Book VI.

Keywords: İdrīs Bidlīsī, *Hašt Bihišt VI*, Murād II, Ottoman, Persian, Arabic

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ВАРИАЦИИ ПРОЧТЕНИЯ В ФОКУСЕ: ВЫБИРАЕМ СЛОВО ŠĀ‘AT ИЗ АВТОГРАФА ПАТНА 533 (ХАШТ БИХИШТ VI)

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Хроника Идриса Бидлиси *Hašt Bihišt* (Восемь раев) повествует о правлении первых восьми оттоманских султанов, завершаясь временем Баязида II (1481–1512), которому автор служил как чиновник. Книга VI этой обширной политической истории посвящена правлению султана Мурада (1421–1444, 1446–1451). Эта краткая заметка обсуждает сложный фрагмент в вводных главах книги VI. Она может быть особо полезной для тех, кто заинтересован в критическом издании неопубликованной книги VI Бидлиси.

Ключевые слова: Идрис Бидлиси, Хашт Бишишт, султан Мурад II, Османская империя

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INTRODUCTION

The reader of the *Hašt Bihišt* normally will be able to reconstruct the original appearance of each manuscript folio as closely as possible by consulting the emendations and alterations lists. Experience tells us, however, it is not an easy task. It is the function of the alterations

* I am obliged to Shakeel Ahmad Shamsi for his help with regard to the copy production of Bidlīsī’s Patna autograph and some other manuscripts.

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list to complete the apparatus for the reconstruction of the manuscript by listing every alteration, whether of correction or revision that Bidlīsī made during composition and review. Due to the facts of Bidlīsī's daily and court life and especially what happened between him and Bāyezīd II and Selim I², I find such an ideal to be questionable, for it creates a number of difficulties and makes certain assumptions that might not be realistic. What is clear is that the fate of later alterations and the best way of keeping them, and how and when to present those that are significant, are important considerations that cannot, however, be developed in this brief note.

It should be also mentioned that the editors have not sought to gather a multitude of witnesses for this or that reading, but rather to ascertain the readings supported by autograph manuscripts (if available). Considering the principle that in critical edition, the most difficult reading is considered the best reading, and Bidlīsī himself has a difficult style, it will be easy to understand what will follow.

PATNA 533: A LITTLE KNOWN AUTOGRAPH IN *HAŠT BIHIŠT* STUDIES

The *Hašt Bihišt* history has survived in some autograph versions. The sixteenth century manuscripts known to contain it are sometimes of a relatively important earlier vintage, and some emanate from partly autographed sections and mainly different non-autographed hands. Nuruosmaniye 3209 (dated 1513–1514), for example, is sometimes mistakenly known as an “autograph” while it is only its conclusion and colophon that has Bidlīsī's hand³.

The autograph version of the *Hašt Bihišt* history survives in at least two manuscripts dating from the early sixteenth century. The first one, Esad Efendi 2199 (dated 1506), is a very important draft version in which there are many corrections and marginal notes⁴. While they all agree on the essential outline of the history, there are so many alterations in the telling that in his draft autograph of the text Bidlīsī opted to present revisions side by side rather than to attempt to re-constitute the common original from which they may be presumed to descend.

Contrary to Esad Efendi 2199, the most important manuscript of Bidlīsī's *Hašt Bihišt*, the second autograph is a very neat manuscript, written in *nasta'liq-i 'ālī*. Bidlīsī's hand which has copied it seems to have contributed some improvements of its own to the story, thereby signifying the history's continuing interest. Compared to Esad Efendi 2199, this manuscript is an unknown manuscript which is less used and it can even be said that this manuscript has not been used in any of the studies that have been completed about the *Hašt Bihišt*⁵.

The following frame sentence tells the tale of Düzme Mustafa, an Ottoman prince who struggled to gain the throne of Sultan Murād II, and what finally happened to him in different ways in autograph and later important versions. The differences have been meticulously detailed by earlier copyists.

² That at least one autograph manuscript of Bidlīsī's history exists in India and is the basis of my work in this brief note is influenced by these events in his life. In his letter to Bāyezīd II, who wrote to him from Mecca, Bidlīsī says that a copy of his *Hašt Bihišt* was taken to India by a merchant. See Fallahzadeh, Mehrdad. “The Eight Paradises (the Hašt Bihišt) and the Question of the Existence of Its Autographs”, *Der Islam* 91/2 (2014): 374–409.

³ See Fallahzadeh, *ibid*.

⁴ For this manuscript, see Markiewicz, Christopher. *The Crisis of Rule in Late Medieval Islam: A Study of Idrīs Bidlīsī (861–926/1457–1520) and Kingship at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century* (PhD dissertation, The University of Chicago, 2014), Appendix C; compare also Husayni, Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī. *Fihrist-i Dastnivišā-yi Fārsī-yi Kitābhāna-yi Ayāsufiyā (Istānbul)* (Tehran: Kitābhāna, Mūza va Markaz-i Asnād-i Maḡlis-i Šurā-yi Islāmī, 2011), 386–390.

⁵ For this autograph manuscript, kept at Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, in Patna, see Anonymous. *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Khuda Bakhsh Public Library Vol. VI (Persian: History)* (Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1994), 203.

The following versions of the sentence are the most important samples, and they occupy by far the most space in the future critical edition of the *Hašt Bihišt*:

§ Esad Efendi 2199: باتفاق او را مقید ساخته جهت وسیلهٔ عفو گناه خود بدرگاه اقبال پناه آوردند و در دارالسلطنه ادرنه او را بنواب سلطانی رسانیدند و بحکم قضا جریان او را از برج قلعه ادرنه مصلوب گردانیدند⁶

§ Patna 533: باتفاق او را مقید و مسجون ساختند و جهت بضاعت عفو و شاعت جریمه خود او را در بلائی گرفتاری انداختند و در دارالسلطنه ادرنه او را همچنان مسلسل و مغلول بدرگاه سلطانی رسانیدند و بحکم قضا جریان تیغ انتقام او را از قلعهٔ ادرنه بر وضع دزدان مصلوب گردانیدند⁷

§ Nuruosmaniye 3209: باتفاق او را مقید و مسجون ساختند و جهت بضاعت عفو و شفاعت جریمهٔ خود او را در بلائی گرفتاری انداختند و در دارالسلطنه ادرنه او را همچنان مسلسل و مغلول بدرگاه سلطانی رسانیدند و بحکم قضا جریان تیغ انتقام او را از قلعهٔ ادرنه بر وضع دزدان مصلوب گردانیدند⁸

§ Hazine 1655: باتفاق او را مقید و مسجون ساختند و جهت بضاعت عفو و شفاعت جریمه خود او را در بلائی گرفتاری انداختند و در دارالسلطنه ادرنه او را همچنان مسلسل و مغلول بدرگاه سلطانی رسانیدند و بحکم قضا جریان تیغ انتقام او را از قلعهٔ ادرنه بر وضع دزدان مصلوب گردانیدند⁹

§ Tabriz 1874: باتفاق او را مقید و مسجون ساختند و جهت بضاعت عفو و شفاعت جریمهٔ خود او را در بلائی گرفتاری انداختند و در دارالسلطنه ادرنه او را همچنان مسلسل و مغلول بدرگاه سلطانی رسانیدند و بحکم قضا جریان تیغ انتقام او را از قلعهٔ ادرنه بر وضع دزدان مصلوب گردانیدند¹⁰

On the basis of certain lexicographical sources, the editor of the Persian text of the *Hašt Bihišt* may suggest that the reading Patna 533 should be considered as the *text*. Others, even Esad Efendi 2199, should be neglected. The key to this phrase is the Arabic word *šāʿat* with the infinitive meaning of «helping»¹¹, which should not be confused with the adjective *šāʿ* «unhappy, miserable»¹². This word is not available in the draft version Esad Efendi 2199, but when Bidlīsī personally rewrote the draft manuscript, he used this difficult word and completed his previous sentence in the draft version. Although the manuscripts Patna 533 and Nuruosmaniye 3209 were written in the same year, but from this word one can conclude that the Patna autograph manuscript was copied first¹³. As we said, Nuruosmaniye 3209 is not a fully autograph copy. When it was prepared under the supervision of Bidlīsī, the copyists could not read this word correctly. The reading of Nuruosmaniye and the subsequent readings all indicate that the difficult reading *šāʿat* was dumb for the earlier and later copyists, except Bidlīsī.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this brief note is to call attention to some anonymous and otherwise unfamiliar readings in Bidlīsī's autographs and important earlier manuscripts. The fact is, one may conclude, that

⁶ See Bidlīsī, Idrīs ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn. *Hašt Bihišt*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi 2199, fol. 307r.

⁷ See Bidlīsī, Idrīs ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn. *Hašt Bihišt*, Patna, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, MS 533, fol. 308r.

⁸ See Bidlīsī, Idrīs ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn. *Hašt Bihišt*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye 3209, fol. 271v.

⁹ See Bidlīsī, Idrīs ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn. *Hašt Bihišt*, Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Hazine 1655, fols. 309r.–309v.

¹⁰ See Bidlīsī, Idrīs ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn. *Hašt Bihišt*, Tabriz, Kitābhāna-yi Markazī-yi Tabriz, Mağmūʿa-yi H. Hussein Nakhdjvani, MS 1874, fol. 235r.

¹¹ See al-Biyhaqī al-Maqarrī, Abū Ġaʿfar Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad. *Tāğ al-Mašādir*, Ed. H. ʿĀlimzāzih (Tehran: Muʾassisa-yi Muʿāliʿāt wa Tahqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1987), ii, 494, esp. ii, 661. It seems that using this type of Perso-Arabic infinitive is influenced by an official of the Mongol state and Persian historian Juvaynī (d.1283). Compare Juvaynī, ʿAlī al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik Muḥammad. *Tārīḫ-i Gabāngusāy*, Ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī (Tehran: Nigāh, 2012), 345, 383, 405, 533, 963.

¹² See Asadī Ṭūsī, Abū Maṣūʿ ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad. *Kitāb-i Luġat-i Furs*, Ed. ʿAbbās Iqbāl (Tehran: Āpḥāna-yi Maġlis, 1930), 228.

¹³ Mehrdad Fallahzadeh also thinks that “Khodabakhsh is older than Nuruosmaniye” (personal communication, September 7, 2023).

the most neat and precise of all *Hašt Bihišt* autographs, as the number of surviving manuscripts implies, appears to have been the *MS Patna 533*. Coming back to the importance of Esad Efendi 2199, one can add that it is the “top” manuscript we need to provide a critical edition of Book VI. However, the critical edition is a process in which the manuscript Patna 533 has a great share.

Esad Efendi and Patna 533 have only survived as manuscripts and neither has been studied in any depth before. One of the major issues that faced *Hašt Bihišt* studies in the recent decades has been the problem of access to its “Indian autograph”. I am not confident that much of what I wrote about, nor, I suspect, is entirely important. However, I am confident that it is worth considering a reflection on this manuscript which is preserved in India where many historical manuscripts are difficult to obtain.

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