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RENATA CZEKALSKA

A TURK OF HINDUSTAN

"I don't know of another example of songs written six hundred years ago which would keep their popularity and would still charm the people and which would be sung until now without changing even a single word."

Jawaharlal Nehru, *The discovery of India*

Amīr Khusrau was born in 1253¹, in a small town called Patiali, not very far from Delhi. The full name of the poet was supposedly Abu-'l Hasan Yamīn-ud-dīn Khusrau. He was the youngest son of a Muslim, a Turkish immigrant Amīr Saif-ud-dīn Mahmūd Shamsi², who came to India at the beginning of the reign of sultan Nāsir-ud-dīn Mahmūd Shāh. Khusrau's mother was an Indian Muslim of Turkish descent³. In his works Khusrau quite frequently mentions his mother's father, who was most probably a high cast Hindu converted to Islam.

He was carefully educated. From a very early age Khusrau revealed a deep desire for learning, as well as incredible talents and in-

¹ There are also different dates given (eg. 1263, in: Rutkowska T., Stasik D., *Zarys historii literatury hindi*; p. 33).

² Askari S. H., Amir Khusrau as a Social Historian, [in:] *Bayaz*, vol. 1, no. 1, June 1977, p. 7.

³ *The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 501.

terest in all the arts. He knew Persian, Arabic and Turkish. He also studied Sūfī philosophy under the supervision of Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliā, who was recognised as a saint during his life-time. Also at a young age, he started being interested in poetry and being vastly gifted, he tried his hand at nearly all kinds of poetic forms. All of these attempts, which have survived till the present day, have brought Khusrau great success.

Amīr Khusrau lived for 72 years. He was a court poet for six consecutive sultans: Ghiyās-ud-dīn Balban, Mu'izz-ud-dīn Kaiqubād, Jalāl-ud-dīn Khaljī, 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī, Qutb-ud-dīn Mubārak Shāh and Ghiyās-ud-dīn Tughluq. His attachment to court began with his employment in the library of sultan Balban. Also, at that time, he moved to Delhi. Very soon he became a famous poet, not only in India but also abroad. "The sultan listened with pleasure to Khusrau's recitations, above all he liked his mournful elegies – *marsiya*s. After some time, he used to invite the poet every day, to be able to admire his *gazals* in Farsi"⁴. Khusrau has been named the best Persian poet of India and at the same time – is recognised as one of the earliest poets of the Hindi language. He himself was proud of his 'Hindi tradition' (as he called it), so it is possible to conclude that through Hindi he understood also Sanskrit. For example, in the introduction to '*Ashīqua*', he uses the term Hindi in a purely adjectival sense, to refer to Sanskrit⁵. Many literary historians claim Khusrau to be the father of Hindi poetry but to recognise him as the father of Urdu poetry would be equally right. He reached such perfect fusion of Hindi and Urdu in the language of his writing, that it became the perfect example for poets for many centuries, right up to present times. Considering that Khusrau lived and created in the 13th/14th century, the language of his works has to be classified as exceptional. The next Hindi poet, who employed spoken idiom, was Kabīr who is definitely indebted to Amīr Khusrau's poetry, still being very popular during the times when Kabīr lived.

Khusrau was a true representative of his times. Under the influence of his Sufi teacher, he developed liberal views on religious and

⁴ Rutkowska T., Stasik D., *Zarys historii literatury hindi*, p. 33.

⁵ McGregor R. S., *Hindi Literature from its Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century*, p. 25.

social matters. Similarly to his master he also did not differentiate between Muslims and Hindus or rich and poor. "His versatile personality seems to be a thing woven as out of rainbow, variegated and attractive. He had seen life from all angles and in its fullness, with its turns and twists, and lights and shades. He stood at the foot of the royal thrones and watched the pomp and grandeur of the crowned heads of Delhi, and went to the tumbling huts of workers and his heart beat in unison with their suffering and woes (...). He roamed the country – from Delhi to Deogir and from Multan to Lakhnauti – and studied not only its languages and customs, its birds and animals, its fauna and flora – but came into a close and personal contact with the men belonging to all strata of society and belonging to all walks of life"⁶.

There are lots of commentaries describing the very easy-going nature of Amīr Khusrau as well as his exceptional poetic talent. His sense of humour and kind attitude towards the world made him incredibly popular in Delhi. According to historical data and also to Khusrau's own verses, his main idea was to bring closer together the two great religions and the two cultures: Hindu and Muslim. For this reason he employed one common language, which he composed himself. Therefore he is recognised as a precursor of the idea of creating a Hindu-Muslim community and at the same time a multi-layered culture based on what was best in both the religions. He was a genuine representative of that culture. He lived among the Turks and in the atmosphere of the sultans' court, so he had worked out for himself a peculiar kind of patriotism. "Although Khusrau's generous opinions of India distinguish him from others of his time, he nonetheless accepts the Turkish and Muslim position in India. In his Persian verse he expresses satisfaction at Muslim victories and feels unease at the Hindu unrest seen in his travels. But India is his home and his life there has been an enlarging experience"⁷. Always in a subtle way he depicted his admiration for everything that was Indian as well as his pride of being an Indian (born in India). "He wrote on many subjects, trying to mention all the aspects which India was famous for. They included: religion,

⁶ Nizami K. A., *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, p. 102.

⁷ McGregor R. S., p. 24.

philosophy, logic, linguistics and Sanskrit grammar, music, mathematics, science subjects and (...) the fruit of the mango tree..."⁸.

The attitude of Amīr Khusrau towards India and the people living there, whether they were Hindus or Muslims, gives testimony of his desire to identify himself with the country and its citizens. Above all he called himself a "Turk of Hindustan" or "a Turk who's mother tongue was Hindū".

Amīr Khusrau was not only a magnificent poet. He was also a musician, a great expert on Indian music, a well-known vocalist and the author of many folk-songs. He mastered Indian music to such a level that he was able to enrich it by composing new *rāgas*. He is reputed to be the author of eleven of them. According to tradition he is also the one who invented the *sitār* and who's idea was dividing the *mṛdaṅgam* into two small drums and in this way constructing the *tablā*.

The great poet died in 1325. Such information can be found in two chronograms: *Adīm-ul-Misāl* and *Tūtiy-i-Shakkar Maqāl*. Both are included in the poem by Shihāb-i-Ma'ammā'i, inscribed on the poet's tomb stone.

Khusrau was supposed to have composed "99"⁹ works on different subjects. Although he was a poet and not a historian, he chose historical themes for his works written in verse and in prose. His connections with six consecutive sultans and close relations with aristocracy, and with military officials as well as with the saint Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya, gave him an unusual opportunity to get to know the truth about the political issues and the social conditions. "He has written about life and conditions of people from birth to death, about their food and drinks, cloths and costumes, toilets and ornaments, sports and amusements, manners and customs, social relations and behaviour, varied professions, means of livelihood, marriage and family life, arts and crafts, recreations, hunting excursions, agricultural and irrigational methods, language and literature, learning and education, virtues and vices of society..."¹⁰. He never tried to write a historical chronicle, but

⁸ Nehru J., *Odkrycie Indii*, p. 242.

⁹ Presumably meaning: 'a lot of'.

¹⁰ Askari S. H., p. 4.

his *masnavīs* and *dīvānas* contain a lot of information on the historical events during the span of Khusrau's life. Khusrau's historical works include¹¹:

1) *Quirān-us-Sa'dain*; the work composed in 1289 describes a historical meeting between Bughrā Khān, the governor of Bengal and his son, Mu'izz-ud-dīn Kaiquabād, the emperor of Delhi. It contains a lot of interesting details, mainly about Delhi itself.

2) *Miftāh-ul-Futūh*; written in 1291, depicts the military campaigns of Jalāl-ud-dīn Khaljī.

3) *Ashīqua*; completed in 1316, not only presents a passionate sentiment between Deval Rani, the daughter of Rājā Karna of Gujarat, and the prince Khizir Khān, but also contains a fair relation of the poet's adventures while being in Mongol's captivity and during his escape. There are also plenty of descriptions of the beauty of Hindustan and of the women living there. In this poem Khusrau praises the richness of Hindi language. He compares Hindi with Arabic, which for him is the greatest language of the World. Khusrau states: "the language of Hindi is like Arabic, in as much as neither admits of being a combination. If there is grammar and syntax in Arabic, there is not one letter less of them in Hindi. If you ask whether there are the sciences of exposition and rhetoric, I answer that Hindi is no way deficient in those respects"¹².

4) *Nūh Sipih*; completed in 1318, describes the war campaigns of Mubarak Shah. This long poem is one of Khusrau's *masnavīs*. It contains many colourful images of his motherland. Also in this work Khusrau is trying to prove the cultural dominance of India over other countries of the world.

5) *Tughluq-nāma*; composed in the last year of the poet's life. It depicts the chain of events which culminated in Ghiyās-ud-dīn Tughluq taking over power.

6) Apart from the above mentioned poems, Khusrau wrote some historical works in prose. These are: *Khazāin-ul-Futūh*, dedicated to the victory of Alā-ud-dīn, sultan of Delhi, over Chittor – the capital of

¹¹ According to *The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 1-2.

¹² Nizami K. A., p. 103.

Mevar and *Tārīkh-i-‘Alāī*, describing the events of the first sixteen years of the rule of sultan ‘Alā-ud-dīn.

Apart from the historical works, Khusrau wrote several poems on different subjects. Among these should be mentioned: *Khamṣa*, *Panjanj*, *Matla-ul-Anwār*, which contained altogether 3310 verses; two love poems *Shīrīn-wa-Khusrau*, containing 4124 verses and *Lailā-wa-Majnūn*, 2360 verses; *Āīna-i-Sikandrī*, 912 verses; *Hasht Bihisht*, 3350 verses and, finally, *Tārīkh-i-Dilhī*.

All the above mentioned works of Amir Khusrau were written in Persian and were typical examples of court poetry. But Khusrau had not limited himself to writing in Persian only. He was the first poet who dared to write using the spoken idiom, which he used to call Dehlavī, Hindavī or Hinduī¹³. Later it was called Kharībolī. Khusrau started writing in this dialect in 1280, when Delhi was ruled by sultan Balban. Unlike other poets of his time he wrote not only for the court and small literary circles but he composed his works for a vaster group of readers. His *dohās* (bilingual couplets in Hindi and Persian) and *pahelis* (riddles) are popular up to this day. It is said, that writing for the masses was one of Khusrau’s dreams. Many folk songs are supposed to be written by him. All these works can be characterised as spontaneous in diction, floating in style and possessing original vocabulary – an unusual combination of Persian and Hinduī, later known as Kharībolī, which at the end of the 13th century was only trying to fight for the status of a dialect. But thanks to the poetic works of Amīr Khusrau it gained a much higher position among Indian languages.

When Khusrau started writing in Hindi, he introduced into this language an exceptional originality of ideas and a new attitude towards the language and the form of poetry. It is possible to presume that his main aim was not only delivering the entertainment for the court, but also introducing the language of Hindustan to his Muslim patrons. Maybe this is why he did not choose traditional themes like religion or philosophy or simply the great deeds of his consecutive protectors. He was more interested in the details of every-day life: a spinning wheel, an oil lamp, a shepherdess, sky full of stars, etc. Khusrau described all

¹³ S. Rutkowska, D. Stasik, p. 33.

the seasons of the year, and each of them according to the conditions of Indian classical style had its own motif and words; he depicted life in its different aspects: an arrival of a bride, longing, rains which brought new life into the dried earth. His poems were learned by heart and were often recited, and in this way the language they were written in was coming into use. Therefore it seems that Khusrau realised his plan systematically and with a complete success. This success was only made greater by the completion of *Khāliqbārī*, a dictionary of Persian-Arabic-Hindi synonyms, which Khusrau wrote¹⁴ in verse and which students of languages had to learn by heart.

The written tradition of Khusrau’s work composed in Hindi is not exactly certain and it is quite possible that their language had undergone some modifications. But there is one statement which can be made without any doubt: Khusrau was one of the first¹⁵, who used the New Indo-Aryan Old Western Hindi or the Kharībolī dialect. And that even today, after 600 years, the poems of Khusrau seem exceptionally modern. It is hard not to get the impression that he was a few centuries ahead of the modern Hindustani.

Generally seen as the constructor of Kharībolī, Khusrau wrote also in Brajbhāṣā. The works which are left to this day prove his brilliant command over the language and also his genius and a complete freedom from the rules of tradition. The poems in Braj are treated as the most authentic as they contain *banitā* – the name of the author included in the text.

Therefore Amīr Khusrau should be recognised as a great historian, musician, soldier, naturalist and a mystic, as a linguist and as a poet. He also introduced numerous changes in the dialects of the Delhi region, which emerged together and created one language – Hindi which

¹⁴ There has been a lot of doubt in the matter of identifying the author of *Khaliqbārī*. For example R. S. McGregor states: “Among Hindi verse ascribed to Khusrau is work called *Khaliqbārī*, a sort of versified glossary giving Hindi equivalents of Arabic and Persian words. The authenticity of this compilation has been questioned on what seems good grounds”; *Hindi Literature from its Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century*, p.25.

¹⁵ *The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 501.

in some ways can be recognised as one of the great deeds of the Turk of Hindustan.

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ELİF DİLMAÇ

ETYMOLOGISCHE NOTIZEN ZU DEN RADLOFF'SCHEN EINTRÄGEN FÜR 'NAGEL'¹

(1) *ablä*; (2) *äksär* ~ *änsär*; (3) *čivi* ~ *čöi* ~ *čüi* ~ *čüiś*; (4) *ğivata*; (5) *kabara* ~ *kybara*; (6) *kadā* ~ *kaday* ~ *kadak* ~ *kadau* ~ *kadū* ~ *kadyy*; (7) *kattyy*; (8) *kazuk*; (9) *mapa*; (10) *mix* ~ *myk* ~ *myx*; (11) *mysmar*; (12) *örgän*; (13) *pojū* ~ *pojyy* ~ *pozuk* ~ *pozyy*; (14) *sväk*; (15) *šegä*; (16) *tamaxsa*; (17) *cyyyś*.²

(1)

Čag. *ablä* (آبله = pers. آبله) '1. Geschwulst, Aufblasen; 2. Nagel' (R I: 634).

Das richtige, pers. Etymon des Wortes wurde schon von Radloff angegeben, folglich < pers. آبله [аб(э)ле] '1. мед. оспа [...]; 2. оспина; 3. волдырь, водяной пузырь; водяная мозоль; 4. прыщ, папула, угорь; [...]' (Rub. I: 39b). Das Wort kommt auch im Osm. vor, und zwar als آبله *ā'bi'le'* '1. a pustule, pimple; 2. a little blister, bleb; 3. a

¹ Die zahlreichen Derivate der Einträge, die in R als eigene Lemmata zu finden sind, sollen in der vorliegenden Arbeit nicht berücksichtigt werden.

² Osm. *musandārā* (موصندره) 'Nagel, Keil' (R IV: 2203) wurde nicht mit aufgenommen, da die von Radloff zitierte Bedeutung vermutlich fehlerhaft ist. Er selbst führt unter o.g. Stichwort *tam musandārāsi* 'Dachkammer' an, aber auch ein eigenes Lemma osm. *musandra* (موصندره) 'Schränk' (ebd.), was der eigentlichen Bedeutung entspricht [vgl. auch Redh.: 1858b; StTA: 658a; VEWT: 345b; für die Etymologie (< griech. μουσάντρα < μεσάντρα) s. Eren: 298a].