

## The Correction of the First Verses of *Shahnameh* (Based on the Critical-scientific Correction of Jalal Khaleghi Motlagh)

Ali Noorsobhi <sup>1</sup>, Dr. Mohammadjafar Yahaghi\* <sup>2</sup>, Dr. Mohammadreza Rashed-mohassel <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. Candidate in Persian Literature and Language, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Ferdowsi University of Mahshad, Mashhad, Iran

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Department of Persian Literature and Language, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Ferdowsi University of Mahshad, Mashhad, Iran

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### Extended Abstract

#### 1. Introduction

Khaleghi Motlagh is one of the last scholars of with the expertise of knowing texts and *Shahnameh* correction. He has edited and published *Shahnameh* in a critical scientific manner. The basis of his work is that the editor first reviews and evaluates all or a large part of the manuscripts and determines its independence or kinship and grouping, then chooses the most valid ones and puts one which is known as the oldest and the most correct ones as the basis of the text, and records the manuscript differences accurately and scientifically at the footnotes or in a separate volume, but unlike the method in which the editor have to be loyal and faithful to the original text in composing, he does not make himself to follow the main text. Rather, he evaluates the recordings in terms of their degree of authenticity (selection) and among them he chooses the right or more accurate recording on some more difficult recording criteria (*Lectio difficilior*) and takes it from any copy to the text; while in cases where all versions are corrupt, he makes a deductive correction. These three steps in the scientific-critical method of text correction are called Rezension, Examination, Konjektur.

After reviewing forty-five manuscripts of *Shahnameh*, Khaleghi Motlagh, selected fifteen manuscripts for his correction among which he made Florence's copy (1217 AD) as the oldest and the most correct volume and as the base of his work. Other copies including the London (1276 AD), Istanbul (1331 AD), Leningrad (1333 AD), Cairo (1340 AD), Cairo (1394 AD), Leiden (1436 AD), Paris (1440 AD), the Vatican (1444 AD), Oxford (1448 AD), Britain (1486 AD) and Berlin (1489 AD) copies were determined as the

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\* Corresponding Author Email: mgyahaghi@yahoo.co.uk

original manuscripts; while the London (1437 AD), Leningrad (1445 AD) and Istanbul (1498 AD) manuscripts have been introduced as non-original ones. Despite many corrections in which only the difference of recordings (negative way) are presented at the footnotes (negative method) Khaleghi Motlagh recorded the differences at the endnotes of his work (positive method) Accordingly, in addition to the discrepancies of the manuscripts, he has also presented the similarities and homologies of the recordings at the footnotes. This article attempts to critically study Khaleghi Motlagh's critical-scientific correction method in order to find the level of his loyalty to the well-accepted principles of critical-scientific correction method and to offer some suggestions for improving the correction and refinement of the text.

## 2. Method

In this study, the beginning verses of *Shahnameh*, as corrected by Khaleghi Motlagh, are evaluated in two parts based on the principles of scientific-critical correction and the images of the recordings. The first section deals with the direct relationship between the text and the footnotes. Then, the second part discusses the shortcomings and extensions of the text. Finally, the article will end with some suggestions to improve the texts

## 3. Results and Discussion

Based on Khaleghi Motlagh's correction, the number of verses at the beginning of the book (from the beginning to the start of the Kioomars story), which he named preface, are 209 verses. We contrasted the text with fifteen versions used in the correction and find a difference. That is, the recording different copies (footnotes) of this section from pages 3-18 of the first volume that cover the edited text. In this regard, 81 handwriting malfunctions or negligence in recording different versions (out of 479 footnotes) can be seen. Add to this list the 24 unreported items (based on original manuscripts) which have been left unanswered. This section discusses such cases that make a fundamental change in the context of *Shahnameh*, including controversial verses besides the editor's method of correction. There are also cases being discussed in which the editor has intertwined some manuscripts and created new recordings.

The editor has counted a number of verses adjuncts for reasons such as the existence of Arabic words or not being in the original version (Florence) and driven them as footnotes. Based on the textual evidence of different versions of *Shahnameh*, in this study, the authenticity or non- authenticity of these verses has been discussed, and it has been concluded that mere Arabic words

or external references (relatively simultaneous works) cannot be conclusively related to the adjunct verse or verses.

In his correction for various parts of *Shahnameh* the editor has chosen titles that cannot be found in any of the manuscripts. These titles are the result of a mix of recordings of various versions that have resulted in producing new copies and have led to more confusion. In this section, we have illustrated such things and noted its damage to textual work.

#### 4. Conclusion

Khaleghi Motlagh's attempt to identify the *Shahnameh* manuscripts and his attempts to correct those manuscripts in a scientific-critical method is undoubtedly an important step towards the advancement of textual studies on *Shahnameh*, which has unique complexities qualitatively and/or quantitatively. Failure to adhere to the manuscripts of the work, failure to show the different versions of the text, using eclecticism, and referring to sources outside the text of *Shahnameh* necessitates a critical approach to Khaleghi Motlagh's correction.

Based on the presented textual evidences and analyses, this article argues that Khaleghi Motlagh's correction cannot be a complete example of a scientific-critical correction that adheres to all definitions and methods. Moreover, it cannot be considered as a work that makes the readers needless to refer to the original manuscript.

Finally, examining the beginning verses of *Shahnameh* with regard to our proposed suggestions for a better modification of the text, it seems that a new critical approach to the mere scientific-critical correction of *Shahnameh* is necessary and inevitable.

It has been discussed and concluded that mere Arabic words or external references (works at the same time as *Shahnameh*) cannot be conclusively related to the adjunct verse or verses.

In his correction for various parts of *Shahnameh* the editor has chosen titles that cannot be found in any of the manuscripts. These titles are the result of a mix of recordings of various versions that have resulted in producing new copies and have led to more confusion. In this section, we have illustrated such things and noted its damage to textual work.

Khaleghi Motlagh's attempt to identify the manuscripts of *Shahnameh* and begin to correct them with a scientific-critical method is an important step towards the advancement of textual studies on *Shahnameh*, which has in the terms of quality and quantity unique complexities. Failure to adhere to the manuscripts of the work, failure to show the different versions of the text,

using eclecticism and referring to sources outside the text of *Shahnameh* necessitates a critical approach to Khaleghi Motlagh's correction.

This article, based on the textual evidence and analysis presented, argues that Khaleghi Motlagh's correction cannot be a complete example of a scientific-critical correction that adheres to all definitions and methods and it cannot be considered that his audience has no need to refer to the original manuscript. Also by examining and analyzing the verses at the beginning of *Shahnameh*, while presenting our suggestions for a better modification of the text, it shows the necessity of a critical look at the only scientific-critical correction of *Shahnameh*.

**Key words:** Shahnameh, Manuscript, Initial verses of Shahnameh, Correcting, Critical- scientific correction

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