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The Poets Who Wrote and Translated Mantiku't Tayr in Turkish Literature

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Mantiku't-Tayr, also known as 'Makamat-1 Tuyur', 'Makalatü't Tuyur', or 'Tuyurname', is the masterpiece of Attar, one of the most prominent Persian philosophers and poets, who has been higly influenced and appreciated with his works by all the Turkish poets. Mantiku't-Tayr, in which the poet describes the 'Divine Unity' in a story format, has been greatly appreciated and esteemed more than his other works. Therefore, it has been translated into Turkish almost in each century since the 14th century. Furthermore, even before the 14th century, Attar and his masterpiece, Mantiku't-Tayr higly contributed to the Turkish islamic mysticism, or Sufism, and hereby very impressed the Turkish sufis.

The impact of Attar is especially remarkable on Mevlana, the great Turkish poet and philosopher. Mevlana meets Attar when he comes from Belhi to Nishabur when he was a child. Attar gives a copy of his Esrarname as a present to little Jelaluddin and prays for the well-being of him (Köprülü 1984: 217). In his Divan, Mevlana states that Attar is the soul and Sena refers to the two eyes of him, and he claims that he follows both of them. Mevlana says "I am the Rumelian Mulla through whose poems flows honey, but I am the servant of Sheikh Attar in words". In his Menakıbü-l Arifin, Eflaki tells that Mevlana carefully analysed İlahi-name written by Senai, Mantıku't Tavr and Musibet-name by Attar. Hüsameddin Çelebi once told Mevlana 'if you could compose a book of poetry in Masnavi measure (rhyming couplets), you would become the travelling companion of all ashiks (lovers of God). From now on instead of speaking the words of others, they would fill their spirits with your work '. Thereafter, Mevlana takes out a piece of paper in which are written the first eighteen couplets of Masnavi and says'

whoever reads what Attar wrote carefully can understand the secrets of Senai, and whoever sincerely reads what Senai wrote can understand what we mean...' (Yazıcı 1953-54: 739). Also, the first eighteen couplets in his Masnavi, Mevlana can be clearly recognized to be under the influence of 'Hz. Ali and the Well' by Cevahirü'z-Zat¹.

In his work, *Gülşen-i Raz*, Sheikh Mahmud Shebisteri praises Attar claiming that there will be not any other poet like Attar in the world even for centuries. Other Mevlevian poets, in addition to Mevlana, also respectfully mention about Attar. For instance, Divane Mehmet Efendi, one of the mevlevian poets in the 16 th century, says in one of his lyric poems (Gölpınarlı 1944: VII)

Tab'um çeragı Kasım-ı Envardan yanar Buy-ı fena dimaguma Attardan gelir

Another Mevlevian poet, Sheikh Galip, also wrote his *Hüsn-ü Aşk* being impressed by Mevlana and Attar (Banarlı 1983: 770). He rewrote the story 'a thief fetches a man to his house to kill him. His wife gives the thief some bread, so he gives up killing the man since they become 'salt and bread 'with the thief². In the new version of the story Sheikh Galip wrote, he respectfully mentions about Attar saying that (Gölpınarlı 1955: VII)

Mu'attar-saz-ı bezm-i ehl-i esrar Şeh-i ma'ni Feridü'd-din-i Attar

Although *Mantıku't-Tayr* is similar to Masnavi in having stories, Mevlana skips from one story to another but finally turns back to the previous story. While telling the story, he goes into the story himself and talks about his moods in bloody tears. It clearly shows us his endless excitement and his eternal calls for God. Although the mentioned style of Mevlana and the extraordinary poems cannot be found in *Mantıku't-Tayr*,

¹ It is one of the works of Sheikh Attar which tells the story of a young man who jumps into water to unite with the whole

² It is one of the works of Sheikh Attar which tells the story of a young man who jumps into water to unite with the whole

Masnavi is mainly based on Mantiku't-Tayr. Mantiku't-Tayr is a work in which the philosophy of the 'Divine Unity' is simply told for the ordinary people to be able understand and is completely based on logic. It is not possible to see the the deep and limitless knowledge of language. philosophy, interpretations, sayings of Mohammed, and jurisprudence in Mantiku't-Tayr unlike Masnavi. Masnavi is ultimately based on love and ecstacy, and it is not the reflection of a period but the cultural world of the islamic community, human soul, and the countless manifestations of humanity' (Gölpınarlı 1944: VII). In this respect, although there are many mystic poems in Mantiku't-Tayr, it is not possible to recognize the divine emotions and ecstacy as in Masnavi. Nevertheless, Attar should be considered a moralist like Sadi (Köprülü 1984: 158). It is also known that some of the stories in Masnavi are based on Mantiku't-Tayr. For example, the stories such as "how the world was created in six days", "the anecdote between the mosquito and Nimrod", "the dialogue between an ant and the Prophet Suleiman", "how Adam was created", "the miracles of Moses carried out by his rod", "the miracle of the Prophet Salih on a camel", "the magic with a horseshoe", "the rejection of the carnation of God", "Hulül3", "the Devil not obeying Adam", "The Flood", "the rising of Christ up to Heaven", "the characteristics of Hoopoe", "the explanation of the meaning of Elest", "the mountain of Elburz and the mythical bird, Simurg", "Moses and Croesus", "the story about Malik-i Dinar" and "the description of adultrated". .

Mevlana wrote Masnavi in the same meter as *Mantıku't-Tayr*, and this style had already been used by sufis since Kelile and Dimne.

In addition to the ones mentioned above, Keşfüz-Zünun says that (1943: 1864) Seyyid Aliyy-i Hemedani brought about an anthology by summarizing *Mantıku't-Tayr*, and that Shem'i later wrote a commentary of this work upon the wish of Tırnakçı Ali Ağa (d. 1596-97). Here is a list of the poets who wrote *Mantıku't-Tayr* and the versions of it, and of their works

³ Hulül means the unity of God and human. A person who believes in Hulül is called Haluli, and the belief is called The School of Hululiye. Both Attar and Mevlana opposed this belief (Gölpınarlı 1944; 1945)

Gülşehri and his *Mantıku't-Tayr*⁴, *Lisanü't Tayr* by Ali Şir Nevai, *Deh Murg* which was written by Shems, a Persian poet (XVI th century) and which was presented to the Ottoman Sultan Yavuz Selim (1467-1520), *Ravzatü't-Tevhid* in which Arifi Arif Mehmed (d. 1563) told anecdotes with regard to birds and fiowers, *İnşirahü's Sadr* which was translated from *Mantıku't-Tayr* by Sheikh Mehmet in 1578, *Simurgname* by İbrahim Gülşeni (d. 1533), *Gülşen- abad'ı* by Shemseddin Sivasi (d. 1597) where discussions of flowers in the divine path are given, and *Mantıku'l Esrar* which was the translation of *Mantıku't-Tayr* written by Fedai Dede (d 1635) (Levend 1984: 138)

Mantıku't-Tayr was first translated into Turkish by Gülşehri, a poet in the 13th century, who wrote Felek-name in Persian and a work in the same style as Masnavi. Gülşehri gives the following information at the beginning of his work just after he tells the anecdote of Sheikh San'an:

Bir kişi bu dastanı eylemiş İlla lafzın key çöpürdek söylemiş
Vezniçün lafzın gidermiş harfını
Şimdi Gülşehri geyürdi bu aya
Anber ile saçın ördi sünbülün
Söz hurufun artuk eksük kılmadı
Tanrının kudretinden yad eyledi
Böyle rengin böyle tatlı böyle ter

It is clear from the lines above that a poet had tanslated *Mantıku't-Tayr* in the 12th or 13 th century; however, as Gülşehri states the poet used an informal language, and he applied a very old and faulty meter. As a result, the poet felt the need to rewrite the work (Köprülü 1984: 235). The Turkish writers of biography consider Gülşehri as the most prominent poet in the 13th and 14th centuries, as they think about Yunus Emre.

⁴ Copies of Gülşehri's Mantıku't-Tayr can be found in the following libraries: TDK (Turkish Language Foundation) Lib. No: A120, B6; Archeology Lib. no: 236, 1306; Süleymaniye Lib. Fatih, No: 2527; a copy at Raif Yelkenci Lib.

The work, *Gülşenname*, has the same meter as *Mantıku't-Tayr* and it consits of 4280 couplets. Gülşehri did not translate *Mantıku't-Tayr* completely but wrote his work following the same theme given in *Mantıku't-Tayr*, and he also added some stories and jokes himself. Moreover, the poet not only made use of *Masnavi* but also *Kabus-name* by Kelile and Dimne. For example, the story with the title 'Tuti-i Hace' can be read in *Esrar-name* as well as *Masnavi*. It is also possible the read the story 'The sailor and Nahvi' in *Masnavi*. Gülşehri wrote "Dastan-ı Şir-ü Harguş" from Kelile and Dimne. Moreover, 'The Principles of Fütüvvet' are also given in *Kabus-name* (Levend 1957: 15-24), (Gölpınarlı 1944: XII-XIV).

Some small changes Gülşehri made in his stories are that he takes eight birds into consideration instead of ten unlike *Mantıku't-Tayr*. He does not mention about the birds "Butemiyar (Heror)" and "Sa've (White Wagtail)" in *Gülşenname*. The poet starts his work with the following couplet which are exactly a decomposition of *Mantıku't-Tayr*.

Hüdhüd ü kuşlar u Si-murga misal Akl u halk u Tanrı oldı zü'l-Celal

Thereby, it is thought to be clear, the birds guided by Hoopoe representing people, set off finding Simurg representing God. Later, the poet translates the second article in *Mantiku't-Tayr* in meaning in the part of "İptida-yı dastanı Simurg". After the birds sett off finding Simurg, the poet writes another long story which does not take place in *Mantiku't-*Tayr. Following this story comes another story about a husband and a wife, just after this he starts to talk about the story "Sheikh San'an". The stories which he directly copied from *Mantiku't-Tayr* are "Sheikh San'an", "Mahmud and Ayaz", "The bird Kuknus", and "Şem-ü Pervane". The stories "Hızır and Veli", "A Child and a sick Sultan", and "The stories about Rüstem" cannot be found in Attar's *Mantiku't-Tayr*. Following these stories, "A merchant going to India", "Nahvi and Mahvi" stories, "the man who swallowed a snake" and Kelile and Dimne's "Rabbit and Lion" and many other stories were taken from *Masnavi* by getting them shorter. In all these stories, Gülşehri makes the birds speak to Hoopoe; however, it is possible to see the

effects of *Mantıku't-Tayr* in organization only. All these examples indicate that Gülşehri based his stories on *Mantıku't-Tayr* just in terms of organization and theme.

In the part of "Hatime" he tells the readers that he calls his work *Mantiku't-Tayr* and that his book is not a translation but a compilation .

Mantıku't-Tayrı ki Attar eyledi Parisice kuş dilini söyledi

Anı Türki suretinde biz dakı Söyledük Tazi gibi Tanrı hakı

Çün felek-name düzettük şahvar Parisice taht u tac u zer-nigar

Türk dilince dahı Taziden latif Mantıku't-Tayr eyledük ana harif

Ben bu Türki defterin çün dürmeyem Parisicesiyile degşürmeyem

Çün murassa söylene te'lifimüz Kimseden utanmaya tasnifimüz

He also states that he wrote a new *Mantıku't-Tayr* (Gölpınarlı 1944; Levend 1957). In this respect, the work of Gülşehri, written under the impact of Attar and also written on *Mantıku't-Tayr*, is completely different from the original *Mantıku't-Tayr*. Surprisingly, the poet claims that his work is no worse than the work of Attar and that no one has ever written such a work of art in Turkish before (Köprülü1984: 235).

Agah Sırrı Levend published the *Mantıku't-Tayr* by Gülşehri in 1957 by making use of the three sound and reliable versions belonging to Raif Yelkenci. In addition, Müjgan Cunbur has based her thesis of doctorate on her commentary on *Mantıku't-Tayr* by comparing the five available versions of it, she has included her comments on the value of

literatue and of thought of *Mantiku't-Tayr* in it together with a bibliography (Cunbur 1952).

Since Gülşehri wrote *Mantıku't-Tayr*, there have been other works in Turkish Literature based on and inspired by *Mantıku't-Tayr* by Attar. Among these works are *Lisanü-t Tayr* by Ali Şir Nevai, *Deh Murg* by Shemsi, and *Simurg-name* by İbrahim Gülşeni. Like the work of Gülşehri, the work of Nevai is also a translation. Although the poet says that his work is a translation in the following couplets

Kim bu defterga birib tevfik Hak Terceme resmi bile yazsam varak

Lisanü-t Tayr is not a traslation but an imitation of Mantıku't-Tayr which resembles Mantıku't-Tayr more than the work of Gülşehri does. Canpolat (1995: 3) says that Nevai left out some parts which he thought not necessary, and he added new stories in which he clearly reflected his personality and the period he lived in. As the poet states in the introduction of his work that he was so deeply indulged in and read Mantıku't-Tayr by Attar secretly, which worried both his father and mother. While other children of his age were touring out and playing, he was reading Mantıku't-Tayr, which was a friend of his seclusion. The poet was so deeply concentrated in the **Divine Love** that he kept himself away from the outer world by reading the implications given in the speeches of the birds in those stories renounced all things saved love for God (Dilperibur 1996: 50).

Nevai brought about his work when he was sixty years old (muslim Cal. 904/ A. D. 1498). Nevai presented the philosophy of unity in existence in a milder way and tried to bring this belief closer to that of the Sunnis. Nevai made many changes in *Mantiku't-Tayr* and added his own stories. The reflections of the social life and the arguments of the statesmen in that period can be clearly recognized in his work. For instance, when the birds come together, they both praise themselves and quarrel about their positions. In this way, Nevai criticized the statesmen in that period. Instead of ten birds as in the work of Attar, he presents eight birds in his work like Gülşehri. He added four more birds to this list, which are "Turtledove", "Pigeon", "Pheasant", "Eagle" and "Duck",

Although the poet used the pseudonym 'Nevai' in his Turkish works he preferred to use the pseudonym "Fani (mortal)" in this work because the birds in his stories finally "die". He explains his words in the following couplet

Çiktürüp kuşlarga köp renc ü 'ana Songı menzil boldı vadi-i fena

Another reason why he used the pseudonym "Fani" was that the purpose of his writing this work was to return to the starting point, and as a result to disappear.

"In this way, the poet passes through the valley of death accompanying the birds, so he provides an utmost unity between his work and his personality" (Canpolat 1995: 6).

In this respect, when he was writing his work consisting of 3598 couplets⁵, Nevai changed the themes in the stories with regard to time and place, and he decreased the number of stories although he basically followed Attar.

The main similarity between the given works is that Simurg, which is the existence and appearance of God, is described by explaining the unity of existence by making resemblances. *Deh Murg*, which was written by Shemsi, about whom little is known, and which consistsof 710 couplets ⁶, is not a translation of *Mantiku't-Tayr* by Attar although it seems to be similar to it. When writing the lines, the poet was inspired by the work of Attar, and he added some motives into it by making some associations (Aksoy 1992 : 2). By the following couplets, he presented his work to Sultan Selim II (1467-1520) upon his return from the war in Iran:

⁵ Althoug Agah Sırrı Levend (1957 : 22) sayr that the work consists of 3553 couplets, Canpolat (1995), who published the text of Lisanü't Tayr in his article 'Türk Diyarlarında Attar'ın İzleri (The Effects of Attar in Turkish Countries) and Dilperibur (1996: 53), who compared the two works both in form and theme, claim that the number of the couplets is 3598.

⁶ The number of the couplets in the work is given as 585 by A. S. Levend (1957: 24) and as 5585 by Dilperibur (1996: 50), which are unlikely to be correct, and according to H. Aksoy it is 710 in Deh Murg.

Bir letayif bir hikâyet söyledüm Adını âlemde Deh Murg eyledüm

Söyledüm nazmile on kuşdan haber İy kerem kânı kabul itsen ne var

The poet takes the birds "The Owl", "The Parrot", "The Aquiline", "The Nightingale", "The Hoopoe", "The Martin", "The Peacock", "The Partridge" and "The Stork" as the main characters in his stories. Each of these birds paises himself saying that he is the best of all the other birds. The Stork appears the last and gives the following pieces of advice to the other birds: honesty towards God, the sympathy for children, self-control, respect to the elderly, justice for the people, money for the penniless, advice to the friend, hiding the true feelings from the foe, modesty to the wise, and silence to the unwise.

Despite being a small book in volume, *Deh Murg* is considerably an invaluable work in that it both gives information about the life in that period and the characters of people, and it is further a book of advice.

In this book, the mentioned birds tell about themselves in turn. They give advice and information on the existence, science, Abel and Cain, Sufism, poetry, various arts, justice, Islamic law, commerce, music (tune and rhytm), and different instruments, philosophy, the world of stars, and agriculture.

Deh Murg is also important in that it enlightens the social, economical, military and religious life in that period.

Another work mentioned by Bursalı Mehmet Tahir (Ottoman Compilers, v. 1, p. 19) is *Simurg-name* written by İbrahim Gülşeni. However, it is not known where the work can be obtained since no reference is shown. Because the name of the work is *Simurg-name*, it is clear that it is written as a copy of *Mantıku't-Tayr* of Attar.

In addition to the ones mentioned above, Attar has also two other works of translation. One of them is *Gülşen-i Simurg* written by Za'ifi Pir Muhammed b. Evranus b. Nured-din from Karatova in 964 (islam. Cal.)/ A. D. 1556, and the other is *Mantık-ı Esrar* written by Feda'i Dede in 1045 (islam. Cal.)/ A. D. 1635.

Gülşen-İ Simurg by Za'ifi is just a translation of the work of Attar both in form and theme, but he excluded some stories in his work. Although he kept the original form of the work, he enriched Gülşen-i Simurg by translating some affixes into Turkish as possible as in his own language. Moreover, he included some anecdotes and idioms in simple and clear spoken Turkish. Za'ifi claims to have translated his work in a delicate style of language as he himself states in the following couplets he added to the end of his masnavi:

Mantıku't-tayrını Attarun latif Eyledüm tercüme vü nazmın şerif

Bir müzeyyen gülşen eyledüm sana Gülşen-i Si-murg virdüm nam ana

The couplets above explicitly show that Za'ifi exactly translated his work; however, the number of the couplets in *Gülşen-i Simurg* is more than the original work. *Mantıku't-Tayr* by Attar consists of 4696 couplets, and as Sadık Cevheri claims (1366) there are 5277 couplets in *Gülşen-i Simurg*.

Za'ifi excluded the following stories in his work such as "Christ and the Devil", "The Sufi and the Angel", "Christ and the man in the cave", "The student who fell in love with the slave of his teacher", "The daughter of the shoemaker who fell in love with the son of a wealthy man", "The death of the insane", "The crying of Sheikh Basri at the grave", "Christ thinking about the death", "The death of the Prophet Halil", "The poor as a vizier", "The salute in the dream", "The question asked to Christ", "The glass broken by Ayaz", "The bat which could not find the Sun". Although the stories given were excluded in *Gülşen-i Simurg* by Za'ifi, the number of the couplets is higher than that of *Mantıku't-Tayr* by Attar. So it shows us that the poet included some additions while translating the work.

Levend says (1959: 177) "The people in the past looked for the harmony between the original work and the version of it in the translations of the works on Koran, the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed and some other important religious figures and works. They

focused on the theme in other works except the mentioned ones above, so they did not include the motives they did not like, and they made some changes and additions themselves". Therefore, although *Gülşen-i Simurg* is an exact translation of the original work, there are also some changes in the text: The poet, for example, changed the ending of the story of "Sheikh San'an" and included some motives used in Turkish culture and customs. There is another part in which he gives advice to his son. This part is especially important in that it draws the potrait of a young Turkish Islamic person in a period in which the Ottoman Empire was at the peak point of its power. There are also some couplets by which the poet complains about his own life. ⁷

As for work of Feda'i Dede, it is an exact translation of *Mantıku't-Tayr* by Attar; he translated the couplets in the work word by word, but he had to change some of them because of the difficulty in meter and expression, he did not also include some original stories. Feda'i states in the introduction under the title "İtizar-i nazm-ı kitab" that he started to translate *Mantıku't-Tayr* in 1945. Although the poet did not include the stories at the end of *Mantıku't-Tayr*, he only added the story "The Sultan and the son of the vizier" in his work. He also added "Hatime" telling when he started and finished his work.

His work was copied in 1065 by Yusuf İbni Ali using the copy written by Mehmet Dede who was one of the Mevlevians living in the Mevlevihane in Damascus, Tripoli. It was also published in the printing house Necip Efendi in Çırçır by Mehmet Ali Vasfi mainly following the version of Mehmet Dede in a legible nashi. The translation consists of 226 pages, and there are some lacks and changes of places of words and sentences. The translator did not think upon the couplets in detail, he just transferred and narrated them with the same words (Gölpınarlı 1944: XV).

Two other studies were carried out by Mohammed el-Bedahşani and Abdurrahim Karahisari. Mohammed el-Bedahşani summarized *Mantıku't-Tayr* and presented it to Sultan Bayezit II (1447/48-1512).

⁷ See Uyar Akalın, Berrin. Za'ifi, Gülşen-i Simurg (academic study- critical text), H. U. ESS (unpublished thesis of doctorate) Ankara. 2001

The latter, Abdurrahim Karahisari, based his work, *Vahdet-name*, on the seven valleys in *Mantıku't-Tayr*.

Mantıku't-Tayr was lastly translated by Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı in two volumes in 1944-45 in İstanbul.

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