Rûmî and the Birth of Turkish Poetry

LARS JOHANSON

In honour of C.S. Mundy

Although Jalâl-ud-dîn Rûmî (604/1207-672/1273), as Gibb puts it, “presided at the birth of West-Turkish poetry” (1900:126), his few Turkic verses, mostly Persian—Turkic mulamma’s, are usually not considered important enough to make him a Turkish poet (Björkman 1962:82; 1964:407).

Beneath such and similar statements there are often undertones of regret and sometimes even slight reproach. Though Rûmî lived “full half a century in a Turkish city”, says Gibb, he “did virtually nothing towards the great work of founding Turkish literature” (1900:149).

The questions heap up: Why did he not write more in Turkish? Was he not interested in the emergence of a Turkish literature? If he had been, would he have contented himself with a few simple verses and playful “macaronic” mixtures of elements from two languages? What was wrong with his attitude towards Turkish? Did he regard it as a vulgar language; and did he even despise the common people speaking it?

Such questions are, of course, wrongly posed. It cannot be concluded from Rûmî’s choice of language for his poetry whether he looked down on Turkish or not, and whether he was, as it is sometimes formulated, “for” or “against” the people (halkan yana vs. halka karşı). Even the question whether he was “interested” in the emergence of a Turkish literature seems rather naïve. It is certainly in the retrospective only that it may appear as if Jalâl-ud-dîn Rûmî had been confronted with such an option at all.
First, it must have been natural for Rūmī to use Persian. Born in Balkh, he had, while still a young man, escaped the Mongol invasion by fleeing to Qonya together with his father Behzād ed-Din Veled. In the 13th century, the capital of the Seljuk Turkish Empire of Rūm was to a great extent Persian-speaking. The stream of fugitives from the East further reinforced the Persian influence in Anatolia. It is, however, equally probable that Rūmī to some degree mastered Turkic, both the Khorasan Turkish variety spoken in Balkh at that time and "Turkish" proper, i.e., the everyday speech of the Seljuk Turks already living in Qonya. In fact, Rūmī spent the mature part of his life in a naturally multilingual environment, in which even demotic Greek was one component.  

We may suppose that Šahābeddin Rūmī brought Persian (P) and East Oghuzic (Khorasan) Turkic (TE) with him, and that he acquired knowledge of Western Oghuzic, Anatolian Turkish (TW) and even Greek (G) in Qonya. We know nothing about the relationship between his competence in TW and TE. Once, however, the author gives us to understand that he does not Turkish (man agar Türk kistan, dānam man in qadar kîh baturkiscâ) but "although I am not a Turk, I know so much that sa is Turkish for water"; VII). This declaration should certainly not be taken literally. As is well known, even Rūmī’s son, Sultan Veled, on several occasions claims the same of himself (Türkçe eger biliyedim ... 'if I knew Turkish', etc.), although his work proves that he has an excellent knowledge of the language.  

However, the linguistic situation just mentioned is certainly not crucial for Rūmī’s choice of a literary language. Nor can his choice be reduced to a simple case of "language loyalty" in a later, nationalistic sense. Languages and their varieties are chosen for specific purposes. In our case, the decisive factors are certain stylistic functions of the languages in question. A language used as a poetic vehicle must be elaborated to fulfill this function. As is well known, the Anatolian Seljuk court culture, including the literary education, was basically Persian. Not only did the poets write in Persian, but they also mod-

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1 As Winck points out, the Seljuk state "displayed only too plainly the features of mixed culture" (1938:28). The territory had been taken from the Byzantines only 150 years before; the Christian element was still considerable and had great influence at court. Christian mercenaries played an important part in the state.
called their work or the poetic tradition of Sanâ'i, 'Attâr and others. A
stylistic variety of language such as this kind of literary Persian
(T*lit) not only offers a developed vocabulary and other devices of a
strict linguistic order but, above all, poetic models and a ready-made
diction, a pre-existing style. It is easier to write in a functional dialect
that offers such stylistic facilities than to transfer these facilities into
another language. Up to the Romantics, the situation in Europe was
similar: many poets preferred Latin, since it offered them familiar
models of poetic diction, a pressed system of expressions and
formulas, patterns of wording and versification.

Summed up: Rûmî simply had, from the beginning, a highly devel-
oped, functioning literary instrument at his disposal, by which he
could also exert direct influence in Qoyrs. This statement is, of
course, not tantamount to saying that he was an imitator. As we know,
Rûmî himself developed the available poetic vehicle to a high degree
of perfection and created a masterly clear and simple style. It is, in,
fact, an essential point in our argumentation that Rûmî’s activity was
poetically productive, whereas that of some of his Turkish successors
was largely reproductive, however creative they may have been in a
strictly linguistic sense.

Since, in Rûmî’s situation, the employment of a literary variety of
Turkic (T*lit) was not necessary, it appears less important whether
such an alternative was at hand at all. It is often claimed that a literary
language of a partly Oghuzic character existed in the East
(Mansuroğlu 1954b; Grunina 1973,27), but it must be born in mind that
we have extremely scarce information about this idiom. Rûmî origi-
nated, like, e.g., Dehshâ, from Khorsasan, but it is unknown (1) to
what extent the alleged Khorsasan Turkic literary language (TE*lit)
really was in use there, (2) to what degree Rûmî mastered it, and (3)

2 Grunina describes the situation in Khorsasan as follows: “On constate la formation
d’une langue écrite à la base du langue qui pouvait être nommée oghouz d’est dans ces ré-
geons avec leur plus grande confusion de la population Oghouz et Qypchak par rapport à la
périphérie, Anatolie Centrale de cette période-là où, dans l’état plus pur était conservée la
première base oghouz. On sent que le principal rôle dans le devenir de cette langue écrite
appartient aux kouïds urbains des centres d’Iran, Azerbaïdjan, plus tard Anatolie [...]. La
littérature et la langue écrite apparaissent chez cette région probablement pas plus tard du XII
siècle à la base de kouïd oghouz d’est urbain, différemment des traits communs de la langue
litéraire d’Anatolie des XIIe—XIVe siècles” (1973,59).
whether it could have been used with success in a TW environment such as Qonya. There are in Rūmi’s work no clear signs of contact with a FE literary tradition. It is, in this connection, irrelevant that his Persia texts contain a number of Turkic words, since these were common integrated borrowings (v. infra) in the Persian of the period in question.3

Turkish was not yet a literary medium, elaborated as a functional dialect in the sense of a TW-li/it variety; it was no equivalent poetic tool which Rūmi or other poets could have used immediately and adequately for their purpose. This is why it is often considered “rough”. European vernaculars in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance were characterized similarly in comparison with Latin. Poets often wrote Latin with greater ease than their mother tongue (Forster 1970:29). In the same way, the great Navi’s, the first major Turkish poet to use his vernacular (“Chaghatai”),1 i.e., in his Malâhidurar al-leptain,2 but it is easier for the beginner to write Persian: the novice gets annoyed with the difficulties connected with composing poetry in Turkish, vâ äsînuma sari mâyî gîlar (“and incites to the easier i.e., Perzian”)3. Saltan Velo’s previously mentioned dictum concerning his know ledge of Turkish no doubt means that “he did not write Turkish verse with the same facility as Persian” (Gibb 1900:154). Authors’ statements on the roughness of Turkish and their own ignorance of it generally refer to its degree of elaboration as a functional dialect and do not necessarily imply any negative judgment on the language as such.

Even if Rūmi did not master Turkish as a poetic medium, he could, of course, have tried to use it, i.e., to found a TW-li/it variety. We know that languages may be less developed (if used in limited functions) but that they are not, as E. Haagen has expressed the situation, “inherently handicapped”; all the great languages of today were once undeveloped. Rūmi could have tried to transfer his diction to Turkish,

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3 These words are “lütischen Lehnwort im Neupersischen, da bei jedem persischen Ver- fasser dieser Zeit frequentiert werden kann” (Mannert 1952:206; cf. 1956:207: ‘o zü- manî bûna faqat yozên yûnûna’). Sêdêbetê xelilê (1934) deals briefly with the Turkish and Persian—Turkish dialects attributed to Rûmî as well as the Turkish words occurring in the Persian text of his dawran and mathnavî.

4 Deveroux 1966:10 (text)
creating a functional dialect with corresponding stylistic facilities. European Renaissance poets often wrote in their mother tongue as if it were Latin, profiting from an established style ready for use. However, reformulation of formulae acquired in a second language (imitatio) may be a difficult task: many authors writing brilliant Latin poems were rather helpless when trying to master their vernacular (Forster 1970:33). The main point, however, is that, even if the transfer is feasible, it must serve a purpose. In Rümi’s case it was not necessary to develop a novel variety. A new literary language is not likely to emerge if there is already one which meets all requirements.

Rümi’s son Sulṭān Veled (623/1226–712/1312) had other purposes and, consequently, acted differently. His mathnawi Rehbūniyye and other works contain a considerable number of couplets in Turkish, the earliest important specimen of Turkish poetry.5 Gibb wonders “what induced the author to break through all precedent, write a series of verses in the Turkish language and incorporate these in a Persian mesnevi” (1900:152). He finds the 22 couplets in Greek, written in Arabic script, still more remarkable and suggests that the poet has “a fancy for vernalising in various tongues”.6 It is, however, important to see that Sulṭān Veled’s situation was entirely different from that of his father. First, he was not immigrant, but born in Qaraman (when his father was still 19 years old). His TW competence may have been higher than that of his father. But, more important, he had other, practical aims: to build up the Mevlevi order7 and to spread and explain his father’s ideas among the common people who did not know Persian. As a poet, he necessarily remained in the shade of the great genius.

Sulṭān Veled’s “Turkish” has been judged upon very differently, since this issue has two aspects, a poetic and a linguistic one, for which, however, the same terms have been employed. Sulṭān Veled is poetically reproductive, according to Gibb, “less a poet than a mystic teacher who taught through verse”; he says “what he has to say in the

5 Sulṭān Veled’s Turkish verses “gehören nicht wie vor als die älteste Niederländisch der niederländischen Sprache” (Adamović 1985:24).
6 Later on, Turkish poets, as a rule, did not learn and use Greek.
7 He took over the generalship of the order, and founded its first branches at several places.
clearest and directest way he can". Some accuse him of "poverty of language"; Vambéry even takes him at his own word, and declares that Sulṭān Veled did not have any command of Turkish at all.8 Rümi's first followers were, as Giih says, "masters who chose to teach in verse rather than in prose", and their work was "single-minded in purpose, artless and naïve in expression"; cf. early Christian texts, written to be understood by less literate persons but regarded as vulgar by the educated. What mattered was the informative aspect. Nevertheless, Turkish had its break-through as a TW-vehicle when brotherhoods, dependent upon missionary activities, directed their efforts to the Turkish-speaking people; cf. the Safawids' use of the vernacular for their religious aims, or Luther's linguistically decisive German bible translation. As for Sulṭān Veled, he shows a remarkable linguistic creativity in forming a new instrument for expressing spiritual ideas, in introducing a genuine Turkish vocabulary including a mystical terminology (see Mansuroğlu 1958).

When "the Turkish cause" is discussed, it should be born in mind that, in the cultural situation in which Jelaldeddin Rūmi and Sulṭān Veled acted, there was no linguistic nationalism or language loyalty of a later kind, since nation and language were not intertwined in a modern way.9 None of them is likely to have been influenced by the fear that Turkish was "menaced". It is highly improbable that they wanted to found a national literary language, however desirable this may appear from a modern Turkish point of view. Nor was there—as later on, under the Ottomans—a strong state that required an official prestige language of its own. As in European mediaeval literature10, language choice was determined by the genre and not on the author's nationality.

The few T, P'I'T and G verses written by Jelaldeddin Rūmi are found in his divān.11 The eastern origin of some linguistic elements of these

8 According to Vambéry, Sulṭān Veled is, "wie er selbst eingestehen, der türkischen Sprache gar nicht mächtig [...] 2a, das Türkische ist noch minuter sehr untürkisch, wenn nicht gar dauernd fühlen [ ... ]" (1901:2).

9 Thus it would also be futile to discuss here whether Rūmi was a "Türk" or not.

10 See Chavov 1950.

11 See Mansuroğlu's edition (1954a), based on 9 manuscripts. According to Mansuroğlu, only 10 of the 17 poems published by Mehmed Şerifeddin (1934) really belong to Rūmi. We are not for the moment concerned with the question whether other pieces
poems is clear. Mansuroğlu recognizes “Central Asian features” in several poems (1954b:256). Doerfer points out that the crossing of Eastern forms such as mâni ‘I bol’ to become’, -Gây (future), and Oghuzic case forms are typical of Khorsan Turkic (1976: 1978:131 sq.).12 Such linguistic facts, however, do not justify the conclusion that the texts belong to Khorsan Turkic literature in the sense of a literary tradition.

If, as suggested, Rûmî used Persian to produce and did not have to reproduce, as his son did, we may ask why he used T and G at all, or why he wrote mutanaf. The Seljuk state was one of mixed culture: Quoya offered a organically multilingual environment. In such communities, the functions of the individual languages are mostly distinguished: each one is used in specific situations, for specific purposes. Bilingual or multilingual poetry, too, gives a functional reflection of the situation. If Rûmî also wrote in Turkic, it certainly means that this language had functions of its own.

Rûmî’s Turkic and Persian–Turkic verses have little in common with his great Persian poems.13 In most cases, it dubious whether they express any mystical content at all. The majority make a “playful” impression, have an everyday vocabulary, and refer, no doubt, to the private life of the poet.14 The Turkic element is sometimes confined to a quotation of a trivial phrase: "Aş yaki turki kih ayat meyadam, "hey geymi saiz?" ‘Every Turk who comes says to me ‘hey, are you well?’ (X),15 On the whole, it seems as if Rûmî simply could not resist using, tentatively, a vernacular with which he had a good deal of pratical contact in his everyday life.

of work, e.g., Ahmed Fuzi’s Čarandâm, may be older than Rûmî’s poema (Björkman 1961:83).

12 Among texts with ‘un-Oghanic’ forms, Doerfer distinguishes such cases from “individual-fremdeinhaltige” Texte (e.g., the manuscripts poem of Seyyid Hamza).


14 For the life of Rûmî’s and his circle, see, e.g., Rûmî 1942; Gölpinar 1953 and 1983.

15 Texts are quoted according to Mansuroğlu’s edition (1954a).
Mansuroğlu characterizes seven poems 16 as “love—anacreontic—mystical verses” (1954:255). Some are no doubt “anacreontic” in the sense of dealing in a cheerful way with the delights of love and wine; the content appears to be predominantly worldly. Even if the motifs are partly erotic, a mystical dimension generally seems to be absent. Terms from the current love and wine poetry are used, though not necessarily as symbols carrying mystical significations. 17 Thus, the word çayır “wine” does not seem to be employed in a religious sense (as, e.g., süçi ‘wine’ in the sufiic poetry of Sultan Veli and others) Rüçi nişâti xâhâm yelisini sereni giyinir; hem sen xâyir iyer sen, hem men qobaz xalâr men. ‘I want to sit alone beside you one day; you will drink wine, and I will play the lute’ (VI). In general, the vocabulary is hardly sufiic, even if terms such as Çalâb “God”, çâlahi “slave master; head of the order” 18, quilaun “leader”, and yel “way” (lot tarqat?) occur in a couple of poems, e.g., Usun yolça xarâ bûtâr quilaun. ‘This is the leader for you on the long way’. (V). In several poems, a “Turk” is mentioned or addressed (VII: turk-i mây-çârah ‘moon-faced Turk’, VIII: marâ yâris turk-i jang âyili ‘I have a quarrelsome Turkish friend’, IX: râdîl turkam ‘my Turk cane’). The situation reflected in several of the poems is likely to concern the relationship to central persons in Rûmi’s life, such as the wandering dervish Semeseddin from Tebriz, the uneducated, beautiful goldsmith Salihaeddin Zarküb from Qonya, and Rûmi’s last “substitute” (muvad u saltîfa). Celebi Hasâmeddin Hasan from Urmiya, all all them doubtlessly of Turkic tongue. In two poems (VI, VII), Semes-i Tebriz

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16 II, III, IV, VI, VII, VIII and IX.
is mentioned; the word čalábî (I) might ever allude to Çelebi Hüsneddin.

Moreover, as Björkman states, Rûmi’s Turkic and mixed Persian—
Turkic verses can hardly be regarded as an attempt at "propaganda" (1962:271). According to Mansuroğlu, however, two of the poems (I. V) are just that, namely "written with the object of spreading religious-mystical ideas amongst the Turkish people" (1954b:255). Bom- bati even suggests that, in one of these poems, Rûmi "se proclame être le guide spirituel de tous les peuples du Soudan et de l’action du prosélytisme défini par lui en Anatolie" (1968:226). This seems to be a somewhat bold overinterpretation of the passage Eger Tat sen, eger Rûm sen, eger Türk. zabâni-i hicâbesânâri bûyümüs 'if you are a Per-

sian, a Greek, or a Turk, learn the language of the tongueless' (V). In any case—even if this interpretation should be correct—the element of "propaganda" for religious-mystical ideas is rather limited in these verses.

Bilingual poems of the kind found in Rûmi’s Divân are a common phenomenon in multilingual, especially diglossic situations. European bi- and multilingual poetry goes back at least to the Middle Ages; many mediaeval European poems are written in both Latin and a vernacular.20 Verses composed in two or more different languages are, on the whole, a highly interesting and many-sided phenomenon. The term ‘literary language-mixing’ seems less appropriate here, since ‘language-mixing’ has been used for very different language contact phenomena, e.g. for both alternation (“code-switching”) and borrow-
ing (“code-copying”); Johanson 1992:12 seq. and 1993). It is important to distinguish these concepts, especially since Ottoman-Turkish poetry was, without normally resorting to alternation, extremely absorptive as regards Arabic and Persian lexical elements. The claim that Ottoman poetry, as a whole, looks like an immense corpus of nulammâ’s is certainly erroneous. In spite of all inserted foreign lexical elements, its basis (including the basic syntax, inflectional endings, etc.) is gener-
ally Turkish in a consistent way.

The kind of ‘mixing’ we are concerned with here is language-alter-

ation in poetry, which, in itself, comprises different types. First, as

20 E.g., the well-known German Christmas carol "In dulci jubilo" (15th century).
for the alternate use of two languages, A and B, it would, in principle, be desirable to try to distinguish A texts interspersed with B elements from B texts interspersed with A elements. One of the languages may be the basic language of a whole poem. In many cases, however, neither A nor B can be considered the basic language of the whole poem, since there is an alternation such that A is basic in some major portions, and B in others. Thus there may be a (more or less regular) alternation from stanza to stanza, from line to line, or from half-line to half-line. Of Rümi's poems, no. II is written in alternate bays: of T and P.

Under these conditions, elements of one language may thus be 'inserted' into a text of the other language, e.g., into a poem, a major portion of it, or a sentence of it. This implies that the inserted element may also be smaller than a sentence; e.g., individual words and parts of sentences from B may be inserted into an A sentence. In some sentences with A and B elements, it may, however, prove difficult or impossible to determine whether A or B is the basic language of the sentence. The heterolingual parts may constitute close syntactic combinations. In Rümi's mulanma's, the texts sometimes show a very close integration of the two languages; a sentence may consist of phrases from both. Such examples are to be found in the poems VI and VIII. In VI, almost every miyra' ends in a Turkish sentence, e.g., zin-i sukra labanat (= P) bir öpkenin ailer men (= T) 'from those sweet lips of yours (= P) I want a little kiss (= T)'. In other cases, as in VII, IX and X, the T element consists of nothing more than direct quotations of speech.

Of course, it is in practice also frequently difficult to distinguish between alternation and borrowing, i.e., to decide whether a given element in an A text is A or B: an insertion in the sense of alternation or a more or less integrated loan element (as, in Rümi's poetics, Persian word such as agar 'if', ham 'and, also', etc.). We shall not treat these problems here, but should like to point out that, e.g., poems such as I and IV might well be considered examples of non-alternation, if paraz 'gudge' and xəf 'pleasant' are regarded as loanwords.

21 Elwest speaks of Spezifikalsatz, if within a literary text linguistic elements are used which do not belong to the language of the text (1972:513).
Rūmī’s poems are certainly mulāmmā’s in the sense of “patchwork” poems or “pieced verse” (Bronwe 1906:66), but it would be false to characterize them as ‘macaronic’, since genuine ‘macaronic’ verses, as introduced by Teofilo Fosengo (Meritus Cocceius) in the 15th century, are based on Latin and mainly contain Latinized Italian words with Latin endings. Thus, the B words are constructed and treated as A words; this is no real alternation.

Why did Rūmī compose mulāmmā’s? Indeed, as we have seen, a mulāmmā can be regarded as a kind of planned ‘code-switching’. It addresses an audience which is not necessarily educated, but obviously hilaire! enough to appreciate it. Even if it is of popular nature, it has an esoteric aspect: it presupposes knowledge of more than one language. Its complex function makes it less translatable than a monolingual poem: it must be rendered in as many idioms as it was composed in, and the function of these must be reproduced. In some situations, such polyphonic texts can certainly be said to express a wish for privacy of a linguistic group: a special mixture of languages is used to exclude monolingual groups from communication; cf. Stein¬
er’s view on the dialectical, at once ‘welding’ and ‘divisive’ nature of speech (1975). As stated above, Rūmī’s non-Persian poems generally make a rather private impression with respect to their content as well.

The combination of languages is functional in the sense that it reflects the actual multilingual situation holding in Rūmī’s community. But for what literary ends did the poet use two languages in this con¬zuputal way? As Elwert points out, language alternation varies from literature to literature, and, within the same culture, from period to period, according to the tolerance of the audience, the literary genre, the taste of the period and the stylistic intentions of the author. Elwert (1960, 1972) shows that the use of foreign language elements in po¬etry is essentially a stylistic problem with a broad diversity of motiva¬tions. Even if the technique of inserting foreign elements can be re-

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22 Foreign elements in poetry do not always presuppose a polyglot audience. Elwert (1972) rightly points out that, in some cases of stylistic use of foreign elements (e.g., since the Romans, for the characterization of a villain), the understanding of the latter is the es¬sential, or not even intended. These states that especially “ni factor de Pierre Loti offre belles émotions de l’obscure, étrange, le charme de l’ambiance”, and quotes some Turkish examples (1961:48).
duced to a few fundamental types, one and the same form is infinitely variable, may originate in very different motives and serve different aesthetic effects.

The question of how the two languages used are interrelated is interesting but complicated, especially as we know very little in general about the organization of languages coexisting in the same mind. As a rule, it is impossible to switch freely between A and B. The languages appear to be tools appropriate to certain definite purposes. Which are, in Rûmi’s mul anna’s, the unique functions of T which cannot be fulfilled by P?

It is improbable that the T elements simply serve the purpose of characterizing a milieu, of supplying local colour, or of demonstrating artistic virtuosity. But the verses are certainly typical of their author’s situation. One of the languages used is an established literary medium; the other one is not. Parly comparable is the muwa’lliya of Muslim Spain, mostly written in Arabic and containing ṣoda with archaic Spanish elements. E.g., the poet expresses, in the ‘language of the culture’, his love to a slave girl, whereupon the latter replies in the ‘language of the people’ (Forster 1970:12). Bilingual poems often seem to occur when a language of a high emotional value is used in the shade of a culturally dominant one. In Rûmi’s mul anna’s, the Turkic component rather seems to stand for modest, more intimate elements of every day life. The intercalation of some phrases may even have a humorous purpose. The audience is likely to have felt the pi- quancy of the literary use of a much liked but otherwise non-literary language. As already mentioned, in one of the mul anna’s (VI), almost every mirda’s ends in a Turkic sequence, e.g.: Dâni ki man bu’lam yalyus seni severmen; čin dar baram nâyây andar yumat olirmen ‘You know that I only love you in the world; if you do not come to my breast, I shall die of grief’.

The situation found here is often the beginning of the use of a language for literary purposes. It can be a preliminary stage of a real poetry in the subordinate language, a first sign of the emergence of a new literary medium. In the Azeri area with its Persian dominance, 23

23 E.g., there are modern examples of mixed Turkish—German verses written by Turks living in Germany.
poets wrote mulammas in Persian and the Turkic vernacular early on (Caferoglu 1964). In early Armeno-Turkic literature we meet Armenian poems, intercalated by Turkic verses (Berberian 1964:813 sq.). Bilingual poems help activate a literarily non-active popular language, even if not necessarily written with this aim. The mixed structure is highly efficient: it allows the poet to "exorcise" the literarily non-elaborated language in the framework of a poem in the elaborated one. The poem is not only a model, but constitutes the structural framework itself. Köprülü suggests that when poets of Khorasan and Transoxania tried to write Turkic poems rather early in 'arâz, they started with Turkic--Persian mulammas (1964:235).

As indicated above, Rûmî is not likely to have had such aims, i.e. to activate a literary non-active popular language. But his Turkic verses are exponents of a stage in the typical Anadolu process of a new language (Kloss 1952): first, the language is used for humorous or folkloristic purposes, then lyric writers may adopt it, followed by prose narrators. When Anatolia was divided into principalities, the literary activities continued in different Turkish dialects, without a prestige idiom accepted by all. Later on, the Ottoman dialect became the only recognised literary medium; its resources were supplemented, its functions elaborated (cf. Johnson 1989). But the domination of Persian continued. A P+lit "roofing" was decisive for the formation of the structures of TW+lit. The vehicle for poetry was to a large extent modelled on Persian; Ottoman poets adapted its topics, style, diction and meter to the different requirements of Turkish. Some formed their style in the less elaborated language and learned to master its stylistic resources by reformulating in TW+lit what they had already formulated in P+lit; cf. the practice of European poets translating their own Latin poems as an exercise to develop their diction in the vernacular. Similar cases of Turkic poetic activities are known from the Aezip area.

In view of Jelâeddin Rûmî's enormous non-linguistic impact on Turkish poetry, the verdict that he "did virtually nothing towards the great work of founding Turkish literature" is obviously absurd. Much more difficult is the assessment of his purely linguistic contribution. Periods of bi- or multilingualism have, however, been decisive for the
emergence of many literary languages. This is one such case. Not only did Jelâilîdîn Rûmî "preside" at the birth of Turkish poetry, his mixed verses also mark the multilingual starting-point of the following grandios development.

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