

Rūmī and the Birth of Turkish Poetry

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In honour of C.S. Mundy

Although Ĵelāleddīn Rūmī (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 *mulammaʿs*, 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 Rūmī 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 Rūmī’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 (*halktan 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 Ĵelāleddīn Rūmī 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 Behā'eddīn 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 Turkic 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.¹

We may suppose that Ğelāleddīn Rūmī brought Persian (*P*) and East Oghuzic (Khorasan) Turkic (*TE*) with him, and that he acquired knowledge of West 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 Turk nīstam, dānam man īn qadar kih batürkīst āb su* 'although I am not a Turk, I know so much that *su* is Turkish for water'; VII). This declaration should certainly not be taken literally. As is well known, even Rūmī's son, Sulḡān Veled, on several occasions claims the same of himself (*Türkçe eger bileydüm ...* '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-

¹ As Wittek 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 renegades played an important part in the state.

elled their work on the poetic tradition of Sanā'ī, 'Aṭṭār and others. A stylistic variety of language such as this kind of literary Persian (*P+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 prepared system of expressions and formulae, patterns of wording and versification.

Summed up: Rūmī simply had, from the beginning, a highly developed, functioning literary instrument at his disposal, by which he could also exert direct influence in Qonya. This statement is, of course, not tantamount to saying that he was an imitator. As we know, Rūmī 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 Rūmī'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 Rūmī'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 1973²), but it must be born in mind that we have extremely scarce information about this idiom. Rūmī originated, like, e.g., Dehhānī, from Khorasan, but it is unknown (1) to what extent the alleged Khorasan Turkic literary language (*TE+lit*) really was in use there, (2) to what degree Rūmī mastered it, and (3)

² Grunina describes the situation in Khorasan as follows: "On constate la formation d'une langue écrite à la base du langage qui pourrait être nommée oghouz d'est dans ces régions avec leur plus grande confusion de la population Oghouz et Qyptchaq par rapport à la périphérie, Anatolie Centrale de cette période-là où, dans l'état plus pur était conservée la première base oghouz. On croit que le principal rôle dans le devenir de cette langue écrite appartient aux koinés urbains des centres d'Iran, Azerbaïdjan, plus tard Anatolie [...]. La littérature et la langue écrite apparues dans cette région probablement pas plus tard du XII siècle à la base de koiné oghouz d'est urbain déterminèrent les traits communs de la langue littéraire d'Anatolie des XIII—XIV siècles" (1973:5sq.)

whether it could have been used with success in a *TW* environment such as Qonya. There are in Rūmī's work no clear signs of contact with a *TE* literary tradition. It is, in this connection, irrelevant that his Persian 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+lit* variety; it was no equivalent poetic tool which Rūmī or other poets could have used immediately and adequately for their purposes. 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 Navā'ī, the first major Turkic poet to use his vernacular ("Chaghatai"), testifies, in his *Muḥākamat al-luyatain*, that it is easier for the beginner to write Persian: the novice gets annoyed with the difficulties connected with composing poetry in Turkic, *vā āsānraq sari māyl qilur* ('and inclines to the easier [i.e., Persian]')⁴. Sūlṭān Veled's previously mentioned dictum concerning his knowledge 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 Rūmī did not master Turkish as a poetic medium, he could, of course, have tried to use it, i.e., to found a *TW+lit* variety. We know that languages may be less developed (if used in limited functions) but that they are not, as E. Haugen has expressed the situation, "inherently handicapped"; all the great languages of today were once undeveloped. Rūmī could have tried to transfer his diction to Turkish,

³ These words are "türkisches Lehngut im Neupersischen, das bei jedem persischen Verfasser jener Zeit festgestellt werden kann" (Mansuroğlu 1952:106; cf. 1954a.:207: "o zamanın bütün farsça yazarlarında görülen yeni farsçaya girmiş türkçe alınma malzeme"). Mehmed Şerefeddin (1934) deals both with the Turkic and Persian—Turkic distichs attributed to Rūmī as well as the Turkic words occurring in the Persian text of his *dīwān* and *mathnavī*.

⁴ Devereux 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 Rūmī's case it was not necessary to develop a *TW+lit* variety. A new literary language is not likely to emerge if there is already one which meets all requirements.

Rūmī's son Sulṭān Veled (623/1226–712/1312) had other purposes and, consequently, acted differently. His mathnavi *Rebābnāme* 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 versifying 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 no 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 Mevlevī 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 "gelten nach wie vor als die älteste Niederschrift der türkeitürkischen 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 Rūmī's first followers were, as Gibb 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+lit* 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 Ĵelāleddīn Rūmī 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 mediæval literature¹⁰, language choice was determined by the genre and not on the author's nationality.

The few *T*, *P/T* and *G* verses written by Ĵelāleddīn Rūmī are found in his *diwān*.¹¹ The eastern origin of some linguistic elements of these

⁸ According to Vambéry, Sulṭān Veled is, "wie er selbst eingesteht, der türkischen Sprache gar nicht mächtig [...] Ja, das Türkische ist auch mitunter sehr untürkisch, wenn nicht geradezu fehlerhaft [...]"(1901:2).

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

¹⁰ See Chaytor 1950.

¹¹ See Mansuroğlu's edition (1954a), based on 9 manuscripts. According to Mansuroğlu, only 10 of the 17 poems published by Mehmed Şerefeddin (1934) really belong to Rūmī. 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 *mān* ‘I bol- ‘to become’, -*GAy* (future), and Oghuzic case forms are typical of Khorasan Turkic (1976; 1978:131 sq.).¹² Such linguistic facts, however, do not justify the conclusion that the texts belong to Khorasan Turkic literature in the sense of a literary tradition.

If, as suggested, Rūmī 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 *mulammaʿs*. The Seljuk state was one of mixed culture; Qonya offered an 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. Bi- or multilingual poetry, too, gives a functional reflection of the situation. If Rūmī also wrote in Turkic, it certainly means that this language had functions of its own.

Rūmī’s Turkic and Persian–Turkic verses have little in common with his great Persian poems.¹³ In most cases, it is 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: *Ān yakī turkī kih āyad gūyadam, ‘hey geymü sen?’* ‘Every Turk who comes says to me, »hey, are you well?«’ (X).¹⁵ On the whole, it seems as if Rūmī simply could not resist using, tentatively, a vernacular with which he had a good deal of practical contact in his everyday life.

of work, e.g., Aḥmed Faqīh’s *Ārxnāmā*, may be older than Rūmī’s poems (Björkman 1961:83).

¹² Among texts with ‘un-Ottoman’ forms, Doerfer distinguishes such cases from “individuell fremdbeeinflusste Texte” (e.g., the macaronic poem of Šeyyād Ḥamza).

¹³ Björkman: “Die Bedeutung dieser weniger Verse ist gering, sie sind mit seinen grossen persischen Werken überhaupt nicht zu vergleichen” (1961:82); the verses appear “recht bescheiden, denn sie sind weder inhaltlich noch der Form nach bedeutend, eher machen sie einen spielerischen Eindruck” (1964:406).

¹⁴ For the life of Rūmī’s and his circle, see, e.g., Ritter 1942; Gölpınarlı 1953 and 1983.

¹⁵ Texts are quoted according to Mansuroğlu’s edition (1954a).

Mansuroğlu characterizes seven poems¹⁶ as “love—anacreontic—mystical verses” (1954b: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., *süci* ‘wine’ in the sufic poetry of Sulţān Veli and others) *Rūzī nişast xvāham yalyuz senün qatunđa; hem sen çayır içer sen, hem men qobuz çalar 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 sufic, even if terms such as *Čälāb* ‘God’, *čälābī* ‘slave master; head of the order’¹⁸, *qulavuz* ‘leader’, and *yol* ‘way’ (for *tarīqat*?) occur in a couple of poems, e.g., *Uzun yolda saña budur qulavuz* ‘This is the leader for you on the long way’. (V). In several poems, a “Turk” is mentioned or addressed (VII: *turk-i mäh-čihrah* ‘moon-faced Turk’, VIII: *marā yārīst turk-i jangjūyī* ‘I have a quarrelsome Turkish friend’, IX: *rašīd turkam* ‘my Turk came’). The situation reflected in several of the poems is likely to concern the relationship to central persons in Rūmī’s life, such as the wandering dervish Šemseddīn from Tebriz¹⁹, the uneducated, beautiful goldsmith Šalāhaddīn Zarkūb from Qonya, and Rūmī’s last “substitute” (*nā’ib u xalīfa*), Čelebī Hūsameddīn Hāsan from Urmiya, all all them doubtlessly of Turkic tongue. In two poems (VI, VIII), Šems-i Tebrīz

¹⁶ II, III, IV, VI, VII, VIII and IX.

¹⁷ For an excellent survey of the Sufi-religious vocabulary (as used in the Persian “*Tarīq ut-tahqīq*”, A.H. 744) see Utas 1978.

¹⁸ Cf. Erdal 1982:412sqq.

¹⁹ In 642/1244, Šemseddīn Muḥammed Tebrīzī appears in Qonya, where Rūmī, as Ritter says, “sich in den schönen Derwisch mystisch verliebt”, a love which unleashes a “Strom dichterischer Produktivität” (1942:121). Since his neglected *murīds* were dissatisfied, Šems had to leave for Damascus, but this disappearance did not have the wanted effect: “Maulānā war gänzlich verstört und noch weniger zugänglich als vorher” (Ritter 1942:122). After a new stay in Qonya, Šems disappeared for ever. Only after this separation Rūmī really began to develop his mystical, Sufi-religious poetry. He found Šems again ‘in himself’, i.e. by a process of *identification* with the beloved. Thus, in several of Rūmī’s ghazals the final *bayt* contains the name of Šems-i Tebrīz instead of the author’s own name.

is mentioned; the word *čäläbī* (I) might even allude to Čelebī Ḥusāmeddīn.

Moreover, as Björkman states, Rūmī'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). Bombaci even suggests that, in one of these poems, Rūmī “se proclame être le guide spirituel de tous les peuples du Soufisme 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 Rūm sen, eger Türk, zabān-i bīzabānānrā biyāmūz* ‘if you are a Persian, 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 Rūmī's Diwān are a common phenomenon in multilingual, especially diglossic situations. European bi- and multilingual poetry goes back at least to the Middle Ages; many mediæval 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 *borrowing* (“code-copying”; Johanson 1992:12 sqq. 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 *mulamma's* is certainly erroneous. In spite of all inserted foreign lexical elements, its basis (including the basic syntax, inflectional endings, etc.) is generally Turkish in a consistent way.

The kind of ‘mixing’ we are concerned with here is *language-alternation 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 Rūmī's poems, no. III is written in alternate *bayts* 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.²¹ 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 Rūmī's *mulamma'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 *mişra'* ends in a Turkic sequence, e.g., *zān-i šakar labānat (= P) bir öpkineñ diler 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 Rūmī's poems, 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 *ğaraz* 'grudge' and *xōš* 'pleasant' are regarded as loanwords.

²¹ Elwert speaks of *Sprachsprenkelung*, 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 *mulamma's* in the sense of "patch-work" poems or "pied verse" (Browne 1906:66), but it would be false to characterize them as 'macaronic', since genuine 'macaronic' verses, as introduced by Teofilo Folengo (Merlinus Coccaius) in the 16th 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 *mulamma's*? Indeed, as we have seen, a *mulamma'* can be regarded as a kind of planned 'code-switching'. It addresses an audience which is not necessarily educated, but obviously bilingual enough to appreciate it. Even if it is of popular nature, it has an esoteric aspect: it presupposes knowledge of more than one language.²² 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 functions 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. Steiner'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 contrapuntal 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 poetry is essentially a stylistic problem with a broad diversity of motivations. Even if the technique of inserting foreign elements can be re-

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 Romantics, for the characterization of a milieu), the understanding of the latter is not essential, or not even intended. Giese states that especially "el exotista Pierre Loti ofrece bellos ejemplos de elementos de lenguas orientales para caracterizar el ambiente", and quotes some Turkish examples (1961:81sq.).

duced to a few fundamental types, one and the same form is infinitely variable, may originate in very different motives and serve different æsthetic 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 Rūmī's *mulamma'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. Partly comparable is the *muwaššaha* of Muslim Spain, mostly written in Arabic and containing a coda 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.²³ In Rūmī's *mulamma's*, the Turkic component rather seems to stand for modest, more intimate elements of everyday life. The intercalation of some phrases may even have a humorous purpose. The audience is likely to have felt the piquancy of the literary use of a much liked but otherwise non-literary language. As already mentioned, in one of the *mulamma's* (VI), almost every *mišrā'* ends in a Turkic sequence, e.g.: *Dānī ki man ba'ālam yalyuz seni severmen; cūn dar baram nayāyi andar yamat ölürmen* '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 subordinated language, a first sign of the emergence of a new literary medium. In the Azeri area with its Persian dominance,

²³ E.g., there are modern examples of mixed Turkish—German verses written by Turks living in Germany.

poets wrote *mulamma's* in Persian and the Turkic vernacular early on (Caferoğlu 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 “exercise” 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 ‘arūz, they started with Turkic–Persian *mulamma's* (1964:253).

As indicated above, Rūmī 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 *Ausbau* 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. Johanson 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 metre 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 Azeri area.

In view of Ğelāleddīn Rūmī’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 J̄elāleddīn Rūmī “preside” at the birth of Turkish poetry; his mixed verses also mark the multilingual starting-point of the following grandiose development.

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