

Translations of Shahnameh of Firdausi in the West

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Introduction

Hakim Abol-Qasem Firdausi Tusi also spelled as Firdawsi, Firdusi, Firdousi or Firdausi (literally: man of paradise; sometimes imputed to the Northeastern Ferdows in the old Persia, though not warrantably certified as so) was a renowned and greatly respected Persian poet. He was the author of the “Shahnameh” (The Epic of Kings) which is held in great awe by Iranians as their national epic, somewhat equivalent to the ancient Chinese Journey to the West (Chinese: 西遊記; pinyin: Xīyóuji) by Wu Cheng'en, or to the olden Arab epic of Taghribat Bani Hilal. Firdausi was born in Khorasan in a village near Tus in 940 A.D into a family of landowners (dehghans, better known as Deh-gaans) in the Sassanid dynasty. He was renowned to be a Shiite Muslim. We know little about Firdausi's early life, even his precise name remained in a shade of doubt (Sorkhabi, 2011). Bondari, the first translator of the Shahnameh who rendered the book into Arabic in the 13th century, claims that Firdausi's full name had been al-Amir al-Hakim Abul Qasem Mansur ibn al-Hasan al-Firdausi al-Tusi (Sorkhabi, 2011). Firdausi was a dehghan, making good living from his estates and homesteads enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. The poet had a wife, a son and a daughter. His son died when he was 37, which made Firdausi so desperate all the rest of his life (Sorkhabi, 2011). Details about Firdausi's education are lacking, but he is said to have known Pahlavi and Arabic (Sorkhabi, 2011).

Firdausi's book is apparently the fifth Shahnameh. The first four manuscripts were composed in the Samanid dynasty, in the 10th century. These books were written by Masudi Marvazi, Abu Mo'ayyad Balkhi, Abu Mansur Mohammad and Abu Mansur Daghighi two of which were in prose and two in verse. The “Shahnameh” of Firdausi was composed in verse. As it is clear, none of those manuscripts are so

well-known as Firdausi's *Shahnameh*. The book is popular to the majority of Iranian nationals, but few people have any inkling of the other four *shahnamehs* (Sorkhabi, 2011). This is an indication of Firdausi's success in making his book known to many people and scholars throughout the history. Additionally, it clearly proves that the quality of his book is superior to the other four. Firdausi started the composition of his "*Shahnameh*" between 978-980 A. D. as mentioned in his poems, he spent over three decades (to 1010) composing it (Sorkhabi, 2011). *Shahnameh* is one of the most outstanding works of Persian literature, possibly the most outstanding one. Firdausi embarked upon the composition of the "*Shahnameh*" during the reign of the Samanid dynasty to continue working on it after the Samanids were conquered by the Ghaznavids. Later on, he rewrote sections to praise Mahmud of Ghazni, the new Turk ruler of the Ghaznavids. Firdausi finally completed his epic on March 8, 1010. According to him, the final edition of the "*Shahnameh*" contained about sixty thousand distiches (Sorkhabi, 2011). Because of poverty, illness and the death of his son, he presented the book in 7 volumes to Sultan Mahmud who was not as interested in Firdausi and the "*Shahnameh*" as the ruler of the Samanids. He hoped for a great reward from the King, which did not turn out exactly according to his personal wishes and expectations. Firdausi returned to his hometown heartbroken, and died in poverty – disappointed by the king's neglect. Firdausi was buried in his own garden in Tus, because a local cleric forbade his burial in the Muslim cemetery of Tus (Sorkhabi, 2011). Many modern Iranians regard him as the father of the modern Persian language.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the influence of Firdausi in the West through the translations done on his book, the great "*Shahnameh*".

Translations

The "*Shahnameh*" has been translated into more than 30 languages such as Arabic, Armenian, English, Danish, French, German, Japanese, Italian, Latin, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian and Urdu. Some of these translations were made from selected episodes and some from the book in its entirety. In most languages, there are more than one translation of the book. Since the focus of this paper is the impact of The "*Shahnameh*" on the West, we tried to focus on the translations of the book in Europe and the United States. The translation of the "*Shahnameh*" in the West started in the 18th century. Prior to that, Arab and Turk translators had made renderings of the book. The beginning of the 19th century was the onset of Romanticism in European literature. Occidental poets – among whom

Goethe was the most passionate – were most interested in the Oriental poems, especially Arabic and Persian ones (Radfar, 1990). Goethe is the translator of “West-Ostrlicher Diwan”, the poems of Hafiz. In his writings, he makes mention of his great surprise on how Firdausi, coming from a family of deghani background, might have possessed the capacity to compose such a magnificent poetic constellation (Radfar, 1990).

French

The stories of the “Shahnameh” had been brought into France by Muslims (Radfar, 1990). In France, Louis M. Langles, the first French Orientalist, was the pioneering translator who set out to turn episodes of the Shahnameh into French in 1778 (Sorkhabi, 2011). He translated the story of Rostam from the beginning to the unfortunate death of this character along with some analysis on the other characters involved there. He believed that his rendering was considered inexpressive as compared with the original “Shahnameh” textuality itself (Radfar, 1990). In 1810 Von Wallenburg began the translation of some pieces of poetry from the “Shahnameh”; but his work remained incomplete because of his death (Radfar, 1990). Victor Hugo translated some poems of Firdausi in 1829. He loved the story of Zal and his heroic narrations of battles in Mazandaran (Radfar, 1990).

The complete French translation belongs to Jules Mohl (1831-1868), a literati and Orientalist (Sorkhabi, 2011). In 1826, the government of France asked him to take on the translation of the Shahnameh which went on to the end of his prolific life. In 1838, the first volume of his translation was published. He spent around forty years focusing on rendering the “Shahnameh” which came out in seven volumes in ornate French much to the applause of the illuminati (Radfar, 1990). Mohl’s translation was praised by many researchers, orientalist, poets, writers and critics to the extent that a large number of articles came out in black and white on Jules Mohl’s translation (Radfar, 2011). Sainte Beuve, a well-known critic who did not easily grant accolade anyone, has dedicated a full chapter of his book to Firdausi. Then, in 1839, he wrote an article on the poet comparing the “Shahnameh” with “Lliad”, “Odyssee” and “Neblungen” epics, believing, at the same time, the “Shahnameh” to be superior to them all (Radfar, 1990).

German

German scholars got acquainted with the Persian literature through the translation of the “Golestan” of Saadi by Adam Oleorius. It was only then in 1793 when some anthology of the “Shahnameh” episodes were rendered by Friedrich Wall and in 1800 another counterpart in the format of delicately picked pieces was translated by Friedrich Schlegel. To make more comprehensive the collection of German renderings from Firdausi, samples of translations of the “Shahnameh” were published in 1810 by G. Von Ludolf, in 1813 by V. Hammer Pugstall who was a renowned Austrian Orientalist, and in 1816 by G. Wahl the German Iranologist. The first free translation of all but the entire Shahnameh was made by J. Gorres in two volumes impressing the German readership (Radfar, 1990).

In 1838 Johann August Vullers, the well-known Iranologist published another series of the “Shahnameh”, turned into German to be used as textbooks at schools (Radfar, 1990). In 1838 Friedrich Ruckert, the great German Iranologist was affected so much by the “Shahnameh” that he composed the poem “Rustam und Sohrab”. Then, he spent many years of his life translating the “Shahnameh” in whole. His rendition in verse in three volumes was published in 1895 by E. A. Bayer after Ruckert’s death. This translation is one of the greatest works done on Persian books. In 1840, V. Weiss rendered “Sal und Rudabeh” directly from the Persian text of the book and in 1841, “Kei kawos in Masenderan Ausdem Sckahnameh” was translated by him. The task of translating of two other short episodes of the “Shahnameh” was shouldered by E. Amthor in 1841 (Radfar, 1990). Count Adolf Friedrich von Schack first translated the Shahnameh in whole in 1851 which was a grand work of literature (Sorkhabi, 2011). In 1853, renditions of some epics from the original Persian texts by Friedrich Schack were published in two volumes. Schack’s translation is considered as one of the most significant translations of the “Shahnameh” in Europe. In 1890 A. Teichert translated parts of the “Shahnameh” while in 1895 H. Schaupp Horn rendered the story of Rostam from the “Shahnameh”. G. L. Leszcynski, the Polish Orientalist translated Seyavash poem from the epic. Then, in 1922 Yasen Warner translated the “Shahnameh” into German. 1954 witnessed an adaptation of the book translated by K.H. Hansen. In 1960, Uta Von Witzleben translated 21 stories from the “Shahnameh” to be followed by the 1961 rendition of the epic of Firdausi. In 1967, another translation of the book by H. Kanus Credewas published (Radfar, 1990). Schelechta Wssehrd translated the book in verse (Sorkhabi, 2011).

Italian

Since 1873, after the translation of the “Golestan” to Italian, Persian literature has come to the attention of the Italians (Radfar, 1990). The Italian translator of the Shahnameh, ItaloPizzi rendered the entire book in eight volumes (Sorkhabi, 2011). Pizzi also wrote some books and articles on the “Shahnameh”. His basis for translating the Book was Turner Makaan’s rendition (Radfar, 1990).

Bulgarian

Different episodes of the “Shahnameh” have been translated by Bulgarian translators. But a complete version of the Book does not exist in Bulgarian (Radfar, 1990). A nearly complete translation from the French rendition of the “Shahnameh” to Bulgarian by S. Atanasov was published in 1921. In 1985, Ivanburin’s translation of the story of “Kaveh, the blacksmith” from the Russian translation to Bulgarian was published in “The Literature Front” magazine (Radfar, 1990).

Danish

Arthur Christenson’s translation of episodes of the “Shahnameh” was published in 1931. This rendition is deemed of great importance in Scandinavian languages (Radfar, 1990).

Russian

There has been great interest in Persian art and literature in Russia by the middle of the 19th century. In 1849, Vassili Andrievitch Joukovsky has translated some parts of the Shahnameh, the story of Rostam and Sohrab, from the German translation of the book by Ruckert, the famous German Iranologist to Russian. Sokoloff, who was a specialist in Iranian philology, published a translation of the first part of the original Persian poem (Chalisoova, 2006). In 1905, the “Shahnameh” was translated by Sokoloff to Russian in prose. He also rendered the stories of “Zal and Rudabeh” and “Rostam and Sohrab” in 1915 (Radfar, 1990). Again in 1915, the famous Russian orientalist A. Krymsky translated the tale of “Fereidoun and Zahhak” and another section of the “Shahnameh”. Yet, another translation by Krymsky from the beginning of the Shahnameh to the kingdom of Manuchehr was published in 1896

in “Lvov” and again in 1922 in “Kiev”. In 1930, the translation of the story of “Zahhak and Kaveh” by V. Arndet was published in Moscow. In 1934, translations of two parts of the “Shahnameh” by Diakonov were published in Moscow (Radfar, 1990). In 1934, a rendition of some parts of the “Shahnameh” was made in Russian by M. Lozinski, the translator of “Hamlet” and “The Divine Comedy”. His translations of “The Reign of Kayumars, The Killing of Siyamak, The Story of Zahhak and Kave, Zal and Rudabe, The Death of Sohrab, The Reign of BahramGur” in verse were followed by a prose rendition of other episodes in summary (Chalisova, 2006). The next translation of the epic was published in 1935 by M. Diakonov, a famous specialist in the history of ancient Persia who was the first Russian translator who rendered the “Shahnameh” directly from the Persian book into Russian. Before Diakonov, Sokoloff had made a direct translation from the Persian text. Diakonov made great translations from episodes of the “Shshnameh” (Chalisova, 2006). A complete translation of the “Shahnameh” to Russian has commenced since 1955 under the supervision of the “Academy of Sciences”. This translation has been published in 6 volumes (Radfar, 1990). The most complete rendition belongs to V. Derzhavin and S. Lipkin (1964) (Chalisova, 2006). This version was published in 2 volumes in Moscow (Radfar, 1990).

Romanian

In 1964 a translation of selected episodes of the “Shahnameh” by George Dan, the Romanian poet and orientalist, was published (Radfar, 1990).

English

Translations in chronological order with sample translations

The translators are introduced and for some, a sample of the translation with the original Persian text is provided.

Sir William Jones (1746 -1794), the English orientalist was the first European scholar whose enthusiasm led him to the rendition of the “Shahnameh”. In 1774 he translated a few parts from the Book (France, 2000). He compared Firdausi with “Homer” in his “Dissertation on eastern poetry” (Radfar, 1990).

“To find a father only known by name
Wretch that I am, I sought the field of fame

Vain hope! Thy hand has sealed a mother's woes". (Teignmouth, 1806)

In 1785 Joseph Champion translated "The Poems of Firdausi" (France, 2000). It was a rendering of a section of the "Shahnameh" in one volume and was printed in Calcutta by John Hay. A copy of this book was sent to The East India Company along with a letter. Champion couldn't continue his translation because of illness (Radfar, 2011). He started the book by a poem to Sir William Jones dedicating it to him, going on to write about Firdausi's life and works. The book is divided into eight sections starting from the kingdom of Kyumarth and ending with Sam's complaint on the young Rostam (Radfar, 1990).

In 1814 James Atkinson from England translated the story of "Sohrab and Rostam" freely from the original Persian book of Firdausi (France, 2000). He translated the "Shahnameh" to the end of the story of Eskandar in an abridged form mainly in prose, and some parts in verse. His book was reprinted in New York and London in 1886 (Radfar, 1990).

”چو يك بهره از تيره شب درگذشت شباهنگ برچرخ گردان بگشت
در خوابگه نرم کردند باز سخن گفتن آمد نهفته به راز
خرامان بيامد به بالين مست يكي بنده شمعی معنبر به دست
چو خورشيد تابان پر از رنگ و بوی پس پرده اندر يکی ماهروی
به بالا بگردار سروبلندو ابرو کمان و دو گيسو کمند
تو گفتي که بهره ندارد زخاک روانش خرد بود و تن جان پاک" (Yousefi, 1999)

“One watch had passed, and still sweet slumber shed
Its magic power around the hero's head
When forth Tahmineh came a damsel held
An amber taper, which the gloom dispelled,
And Near his Pillow stood; in beauty bright,
The monarch's daughter struck his wondering sight.
Clear as the moon in glowing charms arrayed,
Her Winning eyes the light of heaven displayed;
Her cypress form entranced the gazer's view,
Her waving curls the heart, resistless, drew.
Her eyebrows like the Archer's bended bow;
Her ringlets, snares; her cheek, the rose's glow,
Mixed with the lily from her ear tips hung
Rings rich and glittering, star like; and her tongue,
And lips, all sugared sweetness pearls the white Sparkled within a mouth formed
to beguile.

Her Presence dimmed the stars, and breathing round Fragrance and Joy. She scarcely touched the ground.

So light her step, so graceful every part Perfect, and suited to her spotless heart” (Atkinson, 1832).

In 1815 Stephen Weston translated “Episodes from the Shahnamah: on annals of the Persian kings” (France, 2000).

"چنین داد مهراب پاسخ به بدویکه ای سرو سیمین بر ماه روی
به گیتی در از پهلوانان گرد پی زال زر کس نیارد سپرد
چو دست و عنانش به ایوان نگار نبینی و بر زین چنو یک سوار
دل شیر نر دارد و زور پیلدودستش به کردار دریا ی نیل
چو برگاه باشد زر افشان بود چو در جنگ باشد سر افشان بود" (Yousefi, 1999)

“Thus Mihrab to the fair inquirer said:
He, like a cypress, lifts his beauteous head
Bold to the world himself the dauntless shows,
And unsubdued by age, he tramples foes.
A living picture he, with dexterous reins,
When on the plains his courser he restrains,
When from the balcon every turn we see,
And view his prancing steed curvet with glee.
His lion-heart and elephantine hand,
Make love of labor like the Nile expand.
As in the crucible the gold is spread,
So in the field of battle lie the dead” (Weston, 1815).

In 1829 W. Tulloh Roberston’s translation of the story of “Rostam and Sohrab” was published in Calcutta (Radfar, 1990). Turner Makaan the English scientist who worked in India decided to render the “Shahnameh”. His translation of the book in 2300 pages was published in 1829 (Radfar, 1990). In 1832, James Atkinson translated “The Shahnameh of the Persian poet Firdausi” (France, 2000).

In 1853 Mathew Arnold, the English poet and researcher, translated “Sohrab and Rostam” freely (France, 2000). His translation played a very important role in the popularity of Persian poetry. This translation along with some of Arnold’s own poems was published in a book in London. Although some translation errors can be seen in his rendition, this book has made Firdausi known to English people more than ever (Radfar, 1990).

"تو گفنی آفتاب و اختران درین رزم سهمگین انباز بودند زیرا که ابری

ناگهان در آسمان پدید آمد و خورشید را بر فراز آن دو جنگاور تیره کرد و بادی
از زیر پایشان برخاست و ناله کنان بردشت دامن کشید و هر دوان را در گرد بادی از شن در پیچید
تنها آن دو تن را تاری و تیرگی در میان گرفت و بس" (Yousefi, 1999).

“And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose

Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain, and in a sandy whirlwind wrapped
the pair” (Arnold, 2008).

In 1877 Edward Henry Palmer brought the translation of the story of “Rostam and
EkvanDiv” in his book “The Song of the Reed” (Radfar, 1990).

Helen Zimmern translated “The Epic of the Kings: Stories Retold from Firdusi” in
1882 which consists of prose selections (France, 2000). She rendered the most
important events of the “Shahnameh”. Zimmern did not know Persian and her book
is an adaptation of the French translation of the “Shahnameh” by Mohl. Zimmern’s
book has come out in black and white twice so far (Radfar, 1990).

ز گفتار دهقان، یکی داستان	بپیوندم از گفته ی باستان
ز موبد، بر این گونه برداشت یاد	که یک روز، رستم، هم از بامداد
غمی بُد دلش، رای دخیچیر کرد	کمر بست و ترکش، پر از تیر کرد
چو نزدیکی مرز توران رسید،	بیابان، سراسر، پُر از گور دید
بر افروخت چون گل، رُخ تاجبخش	بخندید و از جای، بر کرد رخس
به تیر و کمان و به گرز و گمند	ببفکند در دشت، نخجیر چند
ز خاشاک و از خار و شاخ درخت،	یکی آتشی بر فروزید، سخت
چو آتش پراکنده شد، پیلتن	درختی بجُست، از در بابزن
یکی نَره گوری بزد بر درخت	که در چنگ او، پَر مرغی نَسخت
چو بریان شد، از هم بکند و بخورد	ز مغز استخوانش، بر آورد گرد
بخفت و بر آسود از روزگار	چمان و چران، رخس در مرغزار

(Yousefi, 1999)

“It came about that on a certain day Rustem arose from his couch, and his mind
was filled with forebodings. He bethought him therefore to go out to the chase. So
he saddled Rakush and made ready his quiver with arrows. Then he turned him
unto the wilds that lie near Turan, even in the direction of the city of Samengan.
And when he was come nigh unto it, he started a herd of asses and made sport
among them till that he was weary of the hunt. Then he caught one and slew it and
roasted it for his meal, and when he had eaten it and broken the bones for the

marrow, he laid himself down to slumber, and Rakush cropped the pasture beside him” (Zimmern, 1883).

In 1900 the translation of excerpts of the “Shahnameh” by J. H. Godel was published in New York and London and in 1902 Moray Anthony Ponter published the story of “Rostam and Sohrab” in London (Radfar, 1990).

Between 1905-1925 Arthur and Edmond Warner translated “The Shahnameh of Firdausi” in 9 volumes. It is a complete English translation in verse (France, 2000). This 3600-page-book is not a good rendition of the “Shahnameh” and could not depict the aesthetic nature of the original text of the “Shahnameh” (Radfar, 1990).

"بنام خداوند بخشنده مهربان
بنام خداوند جان و خرد کزین برتر اندیشه برنگذرد
خداوند نام و خداوند جای خداوند روزی ده رهنمای
خداوند کیوان و گردان فروزنده ماه و ناهید و مهر
ز نام و نشان و گمان برتر است - نگارنده برشده گوهر است"
(Yousefi, 1999)

“In the Name of God the Merciful, the Pitiful
In the name of the Lord of both wisdom and mind,
To nothing sublimer can thought be applied,
The Lord of whatever is named or assigned
A place, the Sustainer of all and the Guide,
The Lord of Saturn and the turning sky,
Who causeth Venus, Sun, and Moon to shine,
Who is above conception, name, or sign,
The artist of the heaven's jewelry!” (Warner, 2000)

In 1907, Alexander Rogers translated “The Shahnameh of Fardusi” freely (France, 2000). This rendition of the critical events of the epic was published in 551 pages (Radfar, 1990).

Two other translations by Wilmot Buxton and William Stigand were published in the same year. Then, V. B. Bohra published an English version of the “Shahnameh” in India; in 1912, another translation of the book by Wallace Gandy came out. His translations of the stories of “Zal and Rudabeh” and “Rostam and Sohrab” were published in 1925 in London (Radfar, 1990).

The rendition of the story of “Rostam and Sohrab” by William Jackson was published in 1920. Then, in 1951, a free translation of the same story in verse by Nathan Haskell Pole was published (Radfar, 1990).

In 1967 Reuben Levy, the late Cambridge professor, translated “The Epic of the kings” which is a prose translation, certain parts of which are in the form of a prose summary (France, 2000).

In 1987 Jerome Clinton translated “The Tragedy of Sohrab and Rostam” (France, 2000). The University of Washington published his book in 215 pages. The introduction of the book contains information on the “Shahnameh” and its cultural significance (Radfar, 1990).

"اگر تندبادی برآید ز کنج ب خاک افگند نارسیده ترنج
ستمکاره خوانمیش ار دادگر هنرمند دانمیش ار بی هنر
اگر مرگ دادست بیداد چیست ز داد این همه بانگ و فریاد چیست" (Yousefi, 1999)

“What if a wind springs up quite suddenly?
And casts a green unripen fruit to earth.
Shall we call this a tyrant’s act, or just?
Shall we consider it as right, or wrong?
If death is just, how can this not be so?
Why then lament and wail at what is just?” (Clinton, 1996)

In 1992, Dick Davis translated “The legend of Seyavsh” which is a blank verse rendition. He translated “Stories from the Shahnameh of Firdausi” in 3 volumes:

Volum1, The Lion and the Throne (1998)

Volum2, Fathers and Sons (2000)

Volum3, Sunset of Empire (2004)

ز اسپ اندر آمد بیدید آن سرای	جهاندار را سست شد دست و پای
همه خانه سرگین بد از گوسفند	یکی طاق بر پای و جای بلند
بدو گفت چیزی ز بهر نشست	فراز آور ای مرد مهمان پرست
چنین داد پاسخ که بر میزبان	به خیره چرا خندی ای مرزبان
گر افگندی هیچ بودی مرا	مگر مرد مهمان ستودی مرا
نه افگندی هست و نه خوردنی	نه پوشیدنی و نه گسترده
به جای دگر خانه جویی رواست	که ایدر همه کارها بی نواست

(Yousefi, 1999)

“Bahram’s limbs were weak with fatigue; he dismounted and looked about the house.

The floors were covered in sheep droppings, but it was a fine building, large and spacious.

Bahram said, “You seem a hospitable man; bring me something to rest on.”

The man replied, “Why are you mocking me? There are no carpets here, as you can see, and there’s no food here either – you had best look for another place to eat and rest” (Davis, 2004).

In 1999, Jerome Clinton translated “In the Dragon's Claws: The Story of Rostam and Esfandiyar” which is a blank verse rendition of Esfandiyar story in the “Shahnameh” (France, 2000).

In 2006, Dick Davis’s book “The Shahnameh: the Persian book of kings” was published. Earlier he had translated the “Shahnameh” in three volumes as mentioned before. This book is the re-edition of those 3 books in one volume.

Davis has PhD. in Medieval Persian Literature and has written many books, most of which are related to Persian literature. His translation of almost the entire “Shahnameh” is an important and outstanding literary work which makes Firdausi and his great epic known to non-scholar readers who may have never even heard of Firdausi. He spent 7 years of his time translating the book, believing it to be worth the time spent (Abedi, 2011). However a shortcoming of his translation is that some parts have been omitted and others are presented in the form of summary; since he believed that much of it is unnecessary and repetitive, showing too many obstacles for the readers. Davis didn’t want to create a text for scholars, but to make an English rendition of the “Shahnameh” as a book good for non-scholars. In order to accomplish his aim, he made use of the Naqqali tradition of Iran (Abedi, 2011). In Iran Firdausi’s epic has always existed in two forms, as a text for the literati, and as stories retold by Naqqals in oral performances in coffee houses. These performances, as in Davis’s book, are mostly in prose, but the high points are in verse. Dick Davis won the “National Endowment for the Humanities” award for this translation. Washington Post has also named it the “Book of the Year” (Abedi, 2011). The two translations of the “Shahnameh” by Reuben Levy and Dick Davis are used more than other English translations (Sorkhabi, 2006).

Conclusion and Discussion

Firdausi is undoubtedly one of the most respected poets of Persia who is not only well known in the Persian-speaking world, but also to the people of other cultures and languages. Many scholars have become interested in his great book the “Shahnameh” so much so that they were pushed to translate it into many of the widely-spoken world languages such as Arabic, Armenian, English, Danish, French, German, Japanese, Italian, Latin, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian and Urdu. Finding all the translations of the “Shahnameh” is not an easy task due to the fact that many renditions of the book in different languages exist. It turns out to be a good proof of the popularity of Firdausi and his epic amongst

different cultures and societies. Russian scholars adore Firdausi to a great extent; nay, many translations were made by some of the Russian translators such as Joukovsky, Sokoloff, Lozinski, Diakonov (Chalisova, 2006), V. Arndet and A.Krymsky (Radfar, 1990). Some of the best translations are also made by French scholars like Mohl and Langles (Sorkhabi, 2011), Von Wallenburg and Victor Hugo (Radfar, 1990). S. Atanasov and Ivan Burin from Bulgaria and a few other translators have renditions of episodes of the epic in Bulgarian. George Dan is the Romanian translator of Firdausi's book. G. L. Leszcynski, J. Gorres, H. KanusCrede, Uta Von Witzleben, K. H. Hansen, Yansen Warner, H. Schaupp Horn, A. Teichert, E. Amthor, V. Weiss, Johann August Vullers, Friedrich Ruckert, V. Hammer Pugstall, G. Von Ludolf, Friedrich Wall, Friedrich Schlegel are among the German translators of the "Shahnameh" (Radfar, 1990). Arthur Christensen has a translation in Danish (Radfar, 1990). Sir William Jones, Stephen Weston, Mathew Arnold, Helen Zimmern, Arthur and Edmond Warner, Alexander Rogers, Reuben Levy, Jerome Clinton and Dick Davis are among those who translated the book in whole or in part to English. Dick Davis's translation of nearly the entire Shahnameh is a book suitable for non-scholar English readers who do not want to have scholarly research, but to enjoy the interesting stories of the book. He has even received an award for his translation (Sorkhabi, 2011). Russian poets like Leo Tolstoy and Pushkin have been affected by Firdausi poems. Cambridge University has also been interested in Firdausi poems and many studies have been conducted there on his life and works. Other scholars have also been under the influence of Firdausi's poetic style. Dr. Federico Mayor, the Director General of UNESCO in 2010, delivered a speech on Firdausi in the congress of 1000th anniversary of the composition of The Shahnameh. As Ziabari asserts: "The United Nations cultural body (UNESCO) has named the year 2010 as 1000th anniversary of the composition of the Shahnameh" (Ziabari, 2010). Elizabeth Laird wrote a new children's story book from the Shahnameh which has recently been published (Laird, 2012). A library in the Albanian city of Berat has been named after Firdausi. Some scholars like the Orientalist Theodor Noldeke and Fritz Wolff from Germany, Henri Massé from France have carried out studies on Firdausi (Sorkhabi, 2011). Hienrich Harbne composed the poem "Der Dichter Firdusi". He is the most famous poet in German literature who adored Firdausi so much. In 1856, Otto Friedrich Gruppe composed the longest poem on Firdausi in German. Other German scholars like Theodor Noldeke, Fritz Wolff, and A. Teichert also have books on Firdausi and the "Shahnameh". Herman Ethe, the well-known orientalist, has written about poems of Firdausi. His research made Firdausi known to the Europeans (Radfar, 1990). ItaloPizzi, the Italian translator of the "Shahnameh" has two works on Firdausi and the "Shahnameh" which are "EpoepaPersiana" and

“Artologia Firdusiana”. Pagliaro, the Italian Iranologist has also carried out researches on the “Shahnameh” along with other Persian epics (Radfar, 1990).

The statue of Firdausi in Rome had been placed in one of the squares named after the Persian poet “Piazzale Firdausi”. Germany renamed the main square of its southern city of Friedrichshafen after Firdausi. There are also statues of him in Oxford University, in Dushanbe a city in Tajikistan on Firdausi Street and in Bosnia in the Center of Science and Culture in Sarajevo.

Epics can be found in almost all languages; however, the effectiveness of the “shahnameh” is something that cannot be ignored and demands more attention and effort to make it known to every single person who may love such stories or to those who are interested in our culture as an attempt to make our splendid folklore known to other people. Firdausi has preserved the great culture of the Persian civilization and made it known to others. He highlighted the positive qualities of human nature such as courage, love and wisdom and had even great impact on other famous Iranian poets like Omar Khayyam, Saadi, Hafiz, Rumi and especially Asadi Tusi (Sorkhabi, 2006). All the above-mentioned assertions indicate that Firdausi is attracting the attention of more and more people to his marvelous poems.

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Appendix 1. Translations of the “Shahnameh” in chronological order

	Translators	Year	Language
1	William Jones	1774	English
2	L. M. Langles	1778	French
3	Joseph Champion	1785	English
4	Friedrich Wall	1793	German
5	Friedrich Schlegel	1800	German
6	Von Wallenburg	1810	French
7	G. Von Ludolf	1810	German
8	V. Hammer Pugstall	1813	German
9	James Atkinson	1814	English
10	Stephen Weston	1815	English
11	G. Wahl	1816	German
12	W. Tulloh	1829	English
13	Turner Makaan	1829	English
14	Victor Hugo	1829	French
15	Jules Mohl	1831	French
16	James Atkinson	1832	English
17	Friedrich Ruckert	1833	German
18	Johann August Vullers	1833	German
19	V. Weiss	1840	German
20	V. Weiss	1841	German
21	E. Amthor	1841	German
22	Joukovsky	1849	Russian

23	Adolf Friedrich Von Schack	1851	German
24	Mathew Arnold	1853	English
25	A. Friedrich Von Schack	1853	German
26	A. Teichert	1890	German
27	Edward Henry Palmer	1877	English
28	Helen Zimmern	1882	English
30	H. Schaupp Horn	1895	German
31	A. Krymsky	1896 &1922	Russian
32	J. H. Gotherl	1900	English
33	Moray Anthony Ponter	1902	English
34	Sokoloff	1905	Russian
35	Arthur & Edmond Warner	1905-1925	English
36	Alexander Rogers	1907	English
37	Wimot Buxton	1907	English
38	V. B. Bohra	1907	English
39	Wallace Gandy	1912	English
40	A. Krymsky	1915	Russian
41	Sokoloff	1915	Russian
42	S. Atanasov	1921	Bulgarian
43	Yansen Warner	1922	German
44	Wallace Gandy	1925	English
45	William Jackson	1920	English
46	V. Arndet	1930	Russian
47	Arthur Christensen	1931	Danish
48	M. Lozinski	1934	Russian
49	Diakonov	1934	Russian
50	Diakonov	1935	Russian
51	Nathan Haskell Pole	1951	English
52	K. H. Hansen	1954	German
53		1955	Russian
54	Ivan Burin	1958	Bulgarian
55	Uta Von Witzleben	1960	German
56	Uta Von Witzleben	1961	German
57	V. Derzhavin & S. Lipkin	1964	Russian

58	George Dan	1964	Romanian
59	H. Kanus- Crede	1967	German
60	Rueben Levy	1967	English
61	Jerome Clinton	1987	English
62	Dick Davis	1992	English
63	Jerome Clinton	1999	English
64	Dick Davis	2006	English
65	J. Gorres		German
66	G. L. Leszcynski		German

Summary

Translations of Shahnameh of Firdausi in the West

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This paper is an attempt to offer an investigation on the influence of Firdausi, the 10th century poet, and his great work “The Shahnameh” on the West regarding the translations of this book; more than sixty translations are discussed here with the names of the translators. Sir William Jones was the first translator of the “Shahnameh” to English (1774). Afterwards, there were other more or less prominent translators to take on and furnish the job of translating the great work of Firdausi’s “Shahnameh”. Dick Davis (1992 & 2006) as well as other scholars whose names are brought in the paper made translations of the book, lately. Worthy of mention as translators to other European modern languages are: Jules Mohl (1831-1868) into French, Count Adolf Friedrich von Schack into German (1851) and I. Pizzi into Italian in 8 volumes. They are among world-renowned translations of Firdausi’s epic. Translations into other languages as Danish, Bulgarian, Romanian and Russian are also discussed. These translations made Firdausi known to the West ever more than before, not only among English-speaking countries but also in several other European nations.

Key words: Firdausi, Shahnameh, translations, Modern European languages