



A Transottoman Text and Linguistic Ecology: Manuscripts of The *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* in Ottoman Bosnia *

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Abstract

This paper examines Bosnian manuscripts of the well-known Persian-Turkish dictionary in verse, *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī*. Widely circulated both within and beyond the Ottoman Empire, the dictionary served as a primer in Persian vocabulary and prosody. It was especially popular in the Empire's peripheries, where its bilingual content often encountered a third language. One such periphery was Bosnia, the Empire's westernmost frontier, where hundreds of copies are preserved today in public and private collections. Transcribed mainly by madrasa students and teachers, many Bosnian copies of *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* lack colophons but abound in paratextual features such as ownership statements, event registers, and autobiographical notes. Marginal and interlinear translations of its vocabulary into Bosnian are particularly significant, revealing how local students engaged with its content. By analyzing these paratextual elements, this study offers new insights into the region's cultural history—particularly its vernacular educational practices—from the early 17th to the late 19th centuries. The presence of the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* in Bosnia provides compelling evidence that vernacularization unfolded largely within the Ottoman cultural sphere without necessarily being imposed from outside. These Bosnian manuscripts thus illuminate both the linguistic ecology of the region and the broader use of vernaculars in the Ottoman Empire.

Keywords

Tuhfe-i Şāhidī, Ottoman Bosnia, Persian Lexicography, Manuscript Culture, Vernacular Education, Linguistic Ecology

Osmanlı Ötesi Bir Metin ve Dilsel Ekoloji: Osmanlı Bosnasında *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* Nüshaları

Özet

Bu makale, meşhur Farsça-Türkçe manzum sözlük *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī*'nin Bosna'daki yazmalarını incelemektedir. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu dâhilinde ve ötesinde geniş bir dolaşıma sahip olan bu sözlük, Farsça kelime bilgisi ve aruz öğretiminde temel bir kaynak işlevi görmüştür. Özellikle iki dilli içeriğinin üçüncü bir dille karşılaştığı imparatorluğun çevre bölgelerinde oldukça popüler olmuştur. Bu çevre bölgelerden biri de, bugün kamusal ve özel koleksiyonlarda yüzlerce nüshası korunan, imparatorluğun en batı sınırındaki Bosna'ydı. Çoğunlukla medrese öğrencileri ve hocaları tarafından istinsah edilen Bosna nüshalarının birçoğunda istinsah kaydı bulunmamakla birlikte, bunlar mülkiyet kayıtları, mülkiyet kayıtları, tarihi hadiselerin kayıtları ve otobiyografik notlar gibi metindışı unsurlar bakımından oldukça zengindir. Sözlüğün kelimelerinin derkenarlara ve satır aralarına yapılan Boşnakça tercümeleri özellikle dikkat çekicidir; zira bu, coğrafyadaki öğrencilerin eserin içeriğiyle nasıl etkileşim kurduklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu metindışı unsurlarının analizi, 17. yüzyılın başlarından 19. yüzyılın sonlarına kadar uzanan dönemde bölgenin kültür tarihine—özellikle de yerel eğitim pratiklerine—yeni bir bakış sunmaktadır. *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī*'nin Bosna'daki varlığı, yerelleşmenin (vernacularization) büyük ölçüde Osmanlı kültürel sahası içinde, dışarıdan dayatılmaksızın geliştiğine dair güçlü bir kanıt sağlamaktadır. Böylece Bosna yazmaları hem bölgenin dilsel ekolojisini hem de Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda yerel dillerin kullanımını aydınlatmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Tuhfe-i Şāhidī, Osmanlı Bosnası, Farsça sözlükler, Yazma kültürü, Yerel dilde eğitim, Dilsel ekoloji

نص يتخطى حدود الفضاء العثماني والإيكولوجيا اللغوية: مخطوطات تحفهء شاهدى في البوسنة العثمانية

الموجز

تتناول هذه المقالة النسخ البوسنية للمعجم الفارسي-التركي المنظوم المشهور بـ تحفهء شاهدى. وقد انتشر هذا المعجم على نطاق واسع داخل الدولة العثمانية وخارجها، وكان يُدرس كتاباً تمهيدياً لتعليم مفردات اللغة الفارسية وعروضها. ولقد حظي بشعبية خاصة في أطراف الإمبراطورية، حيث كان محتواه الشائني اللغوي يلتقي غالباً بلغة ثالثة. ومن بين تلك الأطراف: البوسنة، التي شكّلت أقصى الحدود الغربية للدولة، حيث لا يزال المئات من نُسخه محفوظة إلى اليوم في مجموعات عامة وخاصة. وقد نُسخَت هذه المخطوطات في الغالب على أيدي طُلاب المدارس الدينية ومعلميهم. وكثيرٌ من النُسخ البوسنية لتحفهء شاهدى تفتقر إلى الخواتيم (حُرود المتن/الكولوفونات)، لكنها غنيّة بالملامح الموازية للنص، مثل بيانات التملك، وسجلات الأحداث، والملاحظات السيرية الذاتية. وتكتسب الترجمات الهامشية والبيّن السُطور لمفرداته إلى اللغة البوسنية أهمية خاصة، إذ تكشف عن كيفية تفاعل الطُلاب المحليين مع محتواه. ومن خلال تحليل هذه العناصر الموازية للنص، تُقدّم هذه الدراسة رؤى جديدة في التاريخ الثقافي للمنطقة، ولا سيما في ممارساتها التعليمية باللهجات المحليّة، وذلك من أوائل القرن السابع عشر حتى أواخر القرن التاسع عشر. كما يُعَدُّ وجود تحفهء شاهدى في البوسنة دليلاً قوياً على أن مسار إضفاء الطابع المحلي (التوطين اللغوي) قد تشكّل أساساً ضمن الفضاء الثقافي العثماني، دون أن يكون بالضرورة مفروضاً من الخارج. وهكذا تُضيء هذه النُسخ البوسنية كلاً من البيئة اللغوية للمنطقة، والاستخدام الأوسع للهجات المحليّة في الدولة العثمانية.

الكلمات المفتاحية

تحفهء شاهدى، البوسنة العثمانية، المعاجم الفارسية، ثقافة المخطوط، التعليم باللهجات المحليّة، الإيكولوجيا اللغوية

Introduction: Ottoman Bosnia's Manuscript Legacy

The Ottoman culture was one of the world's great manuscript cultures. Extending from Safavid Iran and the Arab lands in the east to the Balkans and Eastern Europe in the west, this culture reached its westernmost frontier in Bosnia, a position it maintained for four centuries (15th-19th). Thousands of manuscripts in Arabic script circulated in Ottoman Bosnia during this period. Even after the Ottoman withdrawal in 1878, manuscript culture persisted well into the late 19th-century, despite ongoing modernization efforts. The persistence of manuscript culture is particularly evident in relation to Persian literacy, with Bosnia serving as the western frontier of the Persianate world for four centuries. Notably, the first Bosnian translation of the *Pandnāme*, attributed to 'Aṭṭār (d. 618/1211), was handwritten in Arabic script in 1904 - even though printing and the Latin script had been in regular use for decades. Remarkably, *Pandnāme* reading and interpretation continued in Sarajevo four decades later, in post-war 1946. The interpreter was Šaćir Sikirić (d. 1966), who would later become the first professor of Persian at the University of Sarajevo, while a member of the audience recorded his commentary in Arabic script.¹

Today, the Gazi Husrev Beg Library holds the largest collection of Oriental-Islamic manuscripts in Sarajevo, comprising nearly 11,000 codices and over 16,000 titles in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Bosnian. This collection is noteworthy, even by European standards. By the late 19th century, the library held around one thousand manuscripts. Over the course of the 20th century, it acquired numerous public and private collections, paralleling the growth of Suleymaniye Library in Istanbul. The collection, as such, mirrors the overall state of literacy and patterns of book distribution throughout Ottoman Bosnia.

Another significant manuscript collection is the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, which once held approximately five thousand codices and over seven thousand titles. The entire collection was destroyed during the bombardment of Sarajevo in May 1992, though its catalogues stand as enduring testimony to its former wealth. Smaller but significant Islamic manuscript collections also survive in Sarajevo and across Bosnia.

A substantial portion of the manuscripts in Bosnian collections were copied locally. These include reference books and encyclopedic texts, Qur'an copies, and books on Islamic sciences, philosophy, logic, literature, history, geography, medicine, mathematics, astronomy and other natural sciences. The thematic diversity and sheer volume of manuscripts produced and/or preserved in Bosnia testify to the region's deep integration into the Ottoman Empire's intellectual networks. They also indicate that the local learned class sought to keep pace with the intellectual currents of the Empire's major centers and the

¹ *Pend-i Aṭṭār*, Gazi Husrev Beg Library (abbreviated herein as GHB), R-9777.

broader Islamic world. Of particular note are works produced by Bosnian authors in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian during the Ottoman period.

Given that none of the established Ottoman *elsine-i selāse* (Arabic, Persian, Turkish) were their mother tongue, Bosnian authors in the Ottoman period devoted particular attention to composing language manuals, dictionaries, and grammars, thereby creating a substantial linguistic heritage in manuscript form. While precise statistics are difficult to establish, every Bosnian manuscript collection contains dozens of dictionaries. Judging by the number of surviving copies and the geographical spread of their transcription within Ottoman Bosnia, *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* appears to be the most significant lexicographical work represented in these collections.

It is important to note that any conclusions drawn from statistical data on present-day manuscript collections in Bosnia must be considered as provisional, given the well-documented losses sustained both in the distant and recent past. For centuries, Bosnia served as a frontier province of the Ottoman Empire, and numerous public and private libraries were destroyed during the 16th and 17th centuries amid constant political and military turbulence. Particularly devastating were the losses during the Vienna War between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy (1683-1699), culminating in the sack and near-destruction of Sarajevo by the forces of Eugene of Savoy in 1697, when much of the city was set ablaze. The Gazi Husrev Beg Library in Sarajevo, along with its holdings of Oriental books, suffered severe damage at this time.² The 18th century is therefore regarded as a period of renewal and flourishing in the history of book production in Ottoman Bosnia. However, the 19th century brought renewed political upheavals, warfare, and pillaging, during which many libraries were destroyed once more, never to be restored.³ Today's surviving collections are thus highly fragmentary and far from representing the full literary manuscript heritage of the Ottoman period.⁴

I. Corpus, Aims, and Methodology

The surviving manuscript holdings of Bosnia today represent a significant aspect of the overall social and cultural milieu of Ottoman Bosnia and provide a valuable corpus for studying cultural trends in the Ottoman Empire's European territories. This article presents an analysis of the extant Bosnian copies of the famous dictionary *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī*

² Cf. Kasim Dobrača, *Katalog arapskih, turskih, perzijskih i bosanskih rukopisa Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke u Sarajevu* (GHB, Sarajevo, 2000; first edition 1963), XX–XXII.

³ Cf. Osman Lavić, *Bosanske biblioteke osmanskog doba* (Gazi Husrev-begova biblioteka, Sarajevo, 2024), 214–215.

⁴ According to some estimations, only five percent of books from the Ottoman period have survived. Cf. Fehim Nametak, "Rukopisna zbirka Habibe Mehmedbašić iz Stoca", *Anali GHB*, vol. 11-12 (1985), 181.

in Ottoman Bosnia, offering new insights into the development of education in local vernacular languages within the Ottoman Empire.

Transcribed mostly by madrasa students and teachers, many Bosnian copies of the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* lack colophons, which would typically record essential details such as the date, place, and purpose of copying, along with the name, title, and social role of the copyist. Nevertheless, these copies are rich in other handwritten additions, including ownership statements, event registers, and autobiographical notes. Of particular significance are the marginal and interlinear translations of the dictionary's vocabulary into Bosnian, which reveal how local students engaged with the text. They attest to the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī*'s status as a widely used Ottoman textbook and a valuable source for the study of local cultural history.

Why the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī*? The most compelling evidence of the work's popularity in Ottoman Bosnia lies in the sheer number of surviving manuscripts. Ninety-two copies are preserved in the Gazi Husrev Beg Library, while eighty-six were held in the Oriental Institute prior to its destruction. A further seventy-three appear in Sarajevo inheritance inventories (*Tereke Defterleri*) between 1118/1707 and 1244/1808. No other Ottoman lexicographical work was recorded in more than nine copies.⁵ Today, nearly every major manuscript collection contains at least a few copies of this Persian-Turkish verse dictionary, a pattern likely shared by many other large collections of Islamic manuscripts.

By providing a chronological overview based on preserved copies of *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* and analyzing their paratextual elements - primarily interlinear and marginal glosses, as well as prefaces - this article seeks to shed new light on certain aspects of its social and cultural history. Over the course of nearly three centuries, dozens of *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* manuscripts were produced, many of them containing marginal notes in Bosnian, predominantly - though not exclusively - translating the original Persian and Turkish vocabulary. This study seeks to highlight the largely overlooked fact that this verse dictionary served as a foundation for vernacular educational practice during the Ottoman period. In doing so, it challenges earlier, widely accepted assumptions about the process of vernacularization in the Ottoman Empire. For example, in his seminal work, Benedict Anderson argued that the spread of printing technology in early modern Western Europe was the decisive factor in the emergence of the ideological "imagined community" of nations and their national languages in Eurasia.⁶ Moreover, the evidence presented here offers new insights into the use of vernacular languages in the Ottoman realm before the late 18th century and the so-called "Spring of Nations."⁷

⁵ See: Asim Zubčević, *Book Ownership in Ottoman Sarajevo 1707–1828* (doctoral thesis, Leiden University, 2015), 185.

⁶ Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, Verso Books, 1991, second edition).

⁷ Cf. Michiel Leezenberg, "Vernacularisation in the Ottoman Empire: Is Arabic Exception that Proves the Rule?", in: *A Handbook and Reader of Ottoman Arabic*, ed. Esther Miryam-Wagner (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Here, the term *linguistic ecology* is used in its broadest sense, referring to the ways in which languages interact within specific social settings and contexts. This perspective underscores the vibrant and dynamic nature of Islamic manuscript culture, its interconnectedness, and its relationship to the relevant social and linguistic milieu. In doing so, it draws attention to the use of so-called ‘small’ and often neglected languages, highlighting the linguistic diversity of the Ottoman Empire.

II. *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* in and Beyond the Ottoman Empire

Apart from being part of a manuscript culture, the Ottoman intellectual and scholarly tradition is often described as post-classical. Ottoman authors wrote numerous commentaries on classical works of Islamic tradition making these classics easier to read and understand. One such work is the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī*, a Persian-Turkish verse dictionary composed by the Mevlevi sheikh and poet Ibrāhīm Şāhidī Dede (d. 957/1550). It is a relatively concise glossary of rare vocabulary from Rumi’s (d. 672/1273) *Maṣnavī*, arranged in three parts: an introduction (*dībāce*), a main text (*matn*), and a conclusion (*hātime*). The dictionary comprises 455 couplets with about 1,350 Persian lexemes and around 1,200 Turkish equivalents.⁸ The work was intended to build basic Persian vocabulary and to teach the elementary rules of versification. Completed in 921/1515, it reflects the growing importance of Persian literacy in the Ottoman Empire at that time.

Initially conceived as a specialist dictionary for clearly designated recipients (Mevlevi novices) studying the *Maṣnavī*, the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* soon transcended its original audience to become a standard manual for learning Persian vocabulary and prosody across the Ottoman Empire. Şāhidī’s intention - that his work serve as the first textbook for any beginner before approaching Persian classical literature - was realized to a far greater extent than he could have anticipated. Over the following centuries, it became an indispensable part of madrasa curricula and other educational institutions for the study of Persian language, vocabulary and prosody. The Ottoman sources even note that students frequently memorized the *Tuhfe*.⁹

⁸ As the dictionary continued to be copied throughout the Ottoman period, new and divergent versions gradually emerged, containing an ever-increasing number of verses. Consequently, later Ottoman authors translating, adapting, or emulating the original text had access to a larger body of verses and vocabulary. For instance, a commentary on the *Tuhfe* by Nāḍide Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmed (1763) records 399 verses from the original, while Muṣṭafā ‘Iṣāmuddīn (c. 1750) notes 505 verses. Beyond the verse count, the number of Turkish and Persian words also varies among different copies, ranging from 1,200 to 1,600 entries. Cf. Yusuf Öz, *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī Şerhleri* (Selçuk Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Konya, 1999), 24–25; Antoinette C. Verburg, “The *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī*: A Sixteenth Century Persian-Ottoman Dictionary in Rhyme”. Part 1., *Archivum Ottomanicum*, ed. by György Hazai, 15 (1997), 8; Yılmaz İnce, “Şāhidī’nin manzum lügâtinin söz varlığı üzerine bir değerlendirme”, *Karadeniz Araştırmaları* 18, vol. 69 (2021), 209–218.

⁹ See for instance: Mūsā al-Mawlawī al-Ṭarablusī, *Ta’rīb al-Shāhidī*, Suleymaniye, Esat Efendi, 3197, fol. 2a.

In the following centuries, the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* became a true *bestseller* of Ottoman culture, remaining almost indispensable in formal education across the Empire. It was the subject of around forty commentaries, in which authors explained the original Persian vocabulary and updated obsolete Turkish terms. Some focused on prosodic rules, turning their works into prosody manuals. Later, Ottoman lexicographers modelled their own verse dictionaries on Şāhidī's template. Most notably, in the 17th and 18th centuries, trilingual Persian-Turkish-Arabic alphabetical word lists were compiled, transforming this poetic work into a reference tool and making it easier to use.¹⁰

Sometime later, Nebī Efendizāde (d. 1785), in a *kaşīde* entitled *Kaşīde fī el-kütub al-meşhūre fī el-'ulūm* - a poem dedicated to various textbooks used in Ottoman madrasas - listed the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* as a standard manual for learning Persian:

Gar bi-ḥāhī fārsī rā Shāhidī bā Pand ḥān
*Gar bi-ḥāhī intihā dar fārsī Ḥāfız bi-dān*¹¹
[If you want to learn Persian, read Shahidi and Pandname
*If you aim to master Persian, immerse in Hafiz]*¹²

The *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* reached its full potential when its bilingual content was supplemented with a third language. As such, Şāhidī's work was not confined to the Ottoman lands. European Orientalists often read the text and left numerous notes in the margins of its manuscripts.¹³ Two notable examples are preserved in the British Museum in London. One manuscript, owned by Brian Braxton in 1652 (Harl. 5494), contains English glosses for most words. Another, compiled in 1704 by the Syrian Christian Salomon Negri (d. 1727) while in Istanbul, features a quadrilingual word list, adding Latin alongside the Turkish, Persian and Arabic columns of the original (Sloane 3583).¹⁴

In the Ottoman cultural context, the use of this dictionary in the Empire's peripheries - where its bilingual content was juxtaposed with a third language - is of particular interest. In such regions, the *Tuhfe* served as a tool for acquiring both Turkish and Persian. Speakers of other languages needed to learn both, and this dictionary proved most useful in this regard than many comparable works. It is therefore unsurprising to find dozens of copies in places such as Cairo, where the Dār al-Kutub al-Qawmiyya collection includes numerous

¹⁰ Cf. Öz, *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī Şerhleri*, 1999.

¹¹ Cevat İzgi, *Osmanlı Medreselerinde İlim (Riyazi ve Tabii İlimler)* (İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1997), 96.

¹² The translation is ours.

¹³ Paul Babinski, "Ottoman philology and the origins of Persian Studies in Western Europe: the Gulistan's Orientalist Readers", *Lias: Journal of Early Modern Intellectual Culture and its Sources*, 46/2 (2019), 238, 241–242.

¹⁴ Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Turkish Manuscripts in the British Museum* (Printed by Order of the Trustees, London, 1888), 139–140.

manuscripts of the original texts, alongside translations and commentaries.¹⁵ Several copies of the dictionary preserved in the Matenadaran collection in Yerevan point to its presence and influence among Armenians from the 16th to the 18th century.¹⁶ One notable example is a 1721 copy of *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* (MS 10586), written entirely in the Armenian script. Although the exact reason for this choice is unknown, it was likely an adaptation for local users and students who studied Turkish, Persian, and Oriental prosody from the *Tuhfe*.¹⁷ Many copies of this dictionary are preserved in libraries and collections across Iran, especially in major centers in the northwest such as Tabriz, as well as in other regions that were temporarily under Ottoman rule.¹⁸

With regard to the adaptations of the *Tuhfe*, *Ta'rib al-Shāhidī*, composed by Mūsā al-Mawlawī al-Ṭarabluṣī in 1136/1724, stands out as perhaps the most successful and celebrated Arabic translation, enjoying great popularity in the Arab provinces during the Ottoman period.¹⁹ Other adaptations of Şāhidī's work are significant for crossing the boundaries of the three cosmopolitan languages of the Ottoman Empire and drawing attention to additional languages. In this way, the *Tuhfe* played a crucial role in the emergence of national lexicographical traditions throughout the Empire - a fact that many authors explicitly acknowledge in their prefaces.²⁰

It is reasonable to assume that most dictionaries from later periods bearing the title *Tuhfe* were, to a greater or lesser extent, adaptations of Şāhidī's lexicographical work. This trend was especially strong in the 18th and 19th centuries, which saw the production of Turkish-Albanian, Turkish-Greek, Turkish-Armenian, and Turkish-Bulgarian dictionaries in verse, all modelled on Şāhidī's well-known prototype.²¹ In each case, the original Persian words were replaced by vocabulary from a third language, ranging from *Ta'rib al-Shāhidī* to its European counterparts. Hence, the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* became a model for developing

¹⁵ *Fihris al-maḥṭūṭāt al-turkiyya al-ʿuṣmāniyya* (al-Hay'a al-miṣriyya al-ʾamma li al-kitāb, al-Qāhira, 1987) vol. 1, 133–140; vol. 3 (1990), 2, 26–28.

¹⁶ Short description of these manuscripts can be found in: Hasmik Kirakosyan, Ani Sargsyan, "The Educational Role of the Late Medieval Persian-Turkish Bilingual Dictionaries", *Turkic Languages* 22, no. 2 (2018), 172.

¹⁷ Cf. *Catalogue of Manuscripts of the Mashtots Matenadaran*, vol. III, compiled by A. Malkhasyan, edited by A. Ter-Stepanyan (Yerevan, 2007), col. 127.

¹⁸ Cf. 'Alī Asghar Shi'rdūst, *Āmūzish-i zabān-i fārsī dar jumhūrī-yi Āzarbāyjān*, Shawrā-yi gustarish-i zabān va adabiyyāt-i fārsī, Tihṛān, 1374 [1995], 171.

¹⁹ Ayşegül Mete, Metin Mete, "Manzum sözlük geleneğinin saklı kalmış bir parçası: *Ta'rib-i Şāhidī* ve tesirleri", *El Ruha 5. International Conference on Social Sciences* (Tunisia, 2019), 117–127.

²⁰ Cf. Mesut Bayram Düzenli, Muhittin Turan, "Türkçe-Farsça manzum sözlüklerden *Tuhfe-i Şemsī*", *The Journal of International Social Research* 9, no. 42 (2016), 122–154.

²¹ Cf. Averbek, "Türkçe-Arnavutça Manzum Sözlük Dürre-i Manzûme'nin Bilinmeyen İki Nüshası", *FSM İlmî Araştırmalar İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi*, no. 12 (2018), 225–226; Robert Elsie, "Albanian Literature in the Moslem Tradition: Eighteen and Early Nineteen Century Albanian Writing in Arabic Script", *Oriens*, vol. 33 (1992), 304; Gökhan Ölker, "Rumca-Türkçe Manzum Sözlük Tuhfetü'l-Uşşâk", *Turkish studies: International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkic and Turkish*, vol. 4/4 (2009), 856–872; Uğur Gürsu, "Mehmed Sabrî ve *Tuhfe-i Sabrî* an Lisân-i Bulgarî Adlı Manzum Bulgarca-Türkçe Sözlüğü", *Türkoloji*, no. 88 (Nisan 2018), 9–31.

vernacular lexicographical traditions as opposed to Ottoman Turkish. This adaptability was made possible by the original work's poetic form and bi-directional structure.

III. *Tuḥfe-i Şāhidī* in Ottoman Bosnia

The multidimensional presence of this dictionary in Bosnia's cultural context is reflected in its use within local madrasas, which is the focus of this section. Notably, five of the roughly forty known Ottoman commentaries were authored by Bosnian scholars: Aḥmed Sūdī Bosnavī (d. 1600), Muṣṭafā Ejubović (d. 1707), 'Aṭfī Aḥmed Bosnavī (d. 1711), 'Alī Zekī Kīmyāgar (d. 1711), and Aḥmed Ḥātem Aḳovalızāde (d. 1754). The earliest known Bosnian dictionary, *Maḳbūl-i 'Ārif* (1631), was likewise composed on the *Tuḥfe* model.²²

The earliest copy of the *Tuḥfe* identified in Bosnia and Herzegovina is held in the Gazi Husrev Beg Library (R-1229/1). This codex (*mecmu'a*), copied by 'Omer b. 'Abdullāh in 994/1586 with no record of the place of copying, contains the *Tuḥfe* alongside five other verse dictionaries bound together: *Tuḥfe-i Ḥūsāmī*, *Naẓm al-asāmī*, *Luḡat-i Lāmī'ī*, *Luḡat-i muḥṭaṣar-i fārsī-turkī* (i.e. *Tuḥfe-i manẓūme* by 'Oṣman b. Ḥuseyn Bosnevi) and *Luḡat-i Kerīmī*. The compilation clearly served as a primer for studying Persian. Given its early date, predating any Ottoman commentary on the work, it is unlikely to have been produced for a local Bosnian madrasa, and was probably brought to Bosnia from elsewhere.

The oldest dated manuscript copied in Bosnia is from 1035/1625 (Gazi Husrev Beg Library, R-9693/3). Although the place of transcription is unknown, it contains interlinear glosses in Turkish, Arabic, and Bosnian, indicating its copying and use in Bosnia. These glosses, which appear contemporaneous with the main text, are of exceptional value for their time (Appendix 1). As existing scholarship notes, early 17th - century literacy in the Ottoman Empire was largely confined to the *elsine-i selāse*—Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Other languages only began to be used in education from the mid-18th century. Thus, these Bosnian glosses, even if motivated by the practical need to acquire vocabulary in two foreign languages, represent one of the earliest known examples of vernacularization in the Ottoman educational sphere.

This information is particularly significant in the light of the emergence of the first Turkish-Bosnian dictionary, *Maḳbūl-i 'ārif*, composed by Meḥmed Hevāyī Uskūfī in 1041/1631. In his introduction, Uskūfī notes that no similar work [to the *Tuḥfe-i Şāhidī*] had previously existed in the Empire.²³ *Maḳbūl-i 'ārif* was among the earliest examples

²² Aḥmed Sūdī Bosnavī (d. 1600) authored the first commentary on the *Tuḥfe-i Şāhidī* in the late 16th century, a work that helped popularize the dictionary across the Ottoman realm in the following decades. However, as Sūdī spent most of his life outside Bosnia, his commentary reflects a broader Ottoman, rather than specifically local Bosnian interest in the work.

²³ Murād etdüm ki düzem bir risāle / Hiç evvelden alınmaya ḥayāle. *Maḳbūl-i 'ārif*, GHB, R-3376, fol. 2a.

of a broader process of vernacularization in the Ottoman Empire. Especially during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, various Ottoman populations across the Empire began adopting new written forms in their local vernacular languages, as will be shown later. Only thirty years after the composition of *Maḳbūl-i 'ārif*, the renowned Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi recorded that “scholars and poets of Sarajevo wrote a verse dictionary in Bosnian, modelled on the Persian book *Shāhidī*.”²⁴ This suggests that by the first half of the 17th century, the *Tuḥfe-i Şāhidī* was not merely known in Bosnia but was already connected to the development of vernacular education and lexicography.

Until the end of the 17th century, another reliable trace of the *Tuḥfe* is encountered in Ottoman Bosnia. In 1087/1676, Ḥasan b. Muḥammed b. sheykh Ḥasan copied the dictionary in the kasaba of Zenica, central Bosnia. As with the copy dated 1625, there is no evidence indicating its use in the madrasa system. This Zenica manuscript was once part of the Oriental Institute’s collection in Sarajevo, but today it survives only in the form of a catalogue description.²⁵

While the number of *Tuḥfe* copies in Ottoman Bosnia must once have been much greater, many were lost to the destruction and looting of Bosnian libraries since the early 18th century. A second commentary, composed in chronological sequence, reveals the scarcity of surviving 17th century sources. Muṣṭafā Ejubović, better known as Šejh Jujo (pronounced as: Sheikh Yuyo), a celebrated Bosnian scholar in Oriental languages and *müderri*s at the Karagoz-Bey Madrasa in Mostar, completed his commentary on the *Tuḥfe* in 1110/1698 under the title *Hulle-i manzūme*. In his preface, he noted that the *Tuḥfe* had already acquired unparalleled fame “in the country and indeed in all lands” (*diyārimızda belki cemī-i diyārda ğayet-i iştihār olūp*) and was widely used among the educated elite (*aşḥāb-i taḥşīl miyānında mütedāville*)²⁶ (Appendix 2).

The expression *kütüb-i mütedāville* (“widespread books”) at that time referred to the most frequently read Persian classics in the Ottoman Empire: *Maṣnavī*, Sa’di’s *Būstān* and *Gulistān*, *Ḥāfiz’ Dīvān* and the *Pandnāme*.²⁷ Ejubović’s statement firmly places *Şāhidī*’s dictionary within this canon of essential works of Persian literacy in Ottoman culture. He further observed that, by his time, extensive use of the work had introduced numerous errors into Bosnian copies, particularly in poetic meters and rules of versification, which prompted some of his colleagues to appeal for a comprehensive commentary.²⁸

²⁴ Robert Dankoff et al., eds., *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, vol. 5 (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011), 229–30.

²⁵ Cf. Trako, *Katalog perzijskih rukopisa*, 76.

²⁶ *Hulle-i manzūme*, GHB R-8311, fol. 1b.

²⁷ Cf. Murat Umut, “Ottoman Reading Persian Classics: Readers and Reading in the Ottoman Empire, 1500–1700”, in *The Edinburgh History of Reading: Early Readers*, ed. Mary Hammond, (Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 162.

²⁸ Muṣṭafā ibn Yūsuf ibn Murād al-Mostārī, *Hulle-i Manzūme*, GHB, R-8311, fol. 1b.

If Ejubović's statements in his preface are accurate, the *Tuhfe*'s circulation and use in Ottoman Bosnia must have been far more extensive than the surviving sources for the period suggest. Its widespread presence indicates that the dictionary was regularly read and copied in local madrasas, where, over time, difficulties in its proper understanding arose. Accordingly, the number of *Tuhfe* copies circulating in the 17th century was likely much higher than the number known to us today. Supporting this view is the fact that Mustafa Ejubović produced at least three handwritten copies of his commentary, which he made available to his students in Mostar.²⁹

Manuscript evidence indicates that the *Tuhfe-i Šāhidī* was most widely used in the second half of the 18th century. This period saw an increased interest in the glossary as a basis for developing local lexicographical traditions within the Empire and coincided with the growing prominence of Ottoman Bosnia's libraries.

More than half of all the *Tuhfe* manuscripts preserved in the Gazi Husrev Beg Library date from the 18th century. Many undated copies can also be attributed to this period on the basis of script, paper, and binding, as noted in catalogue descriptions.³⁰ When these are considered alongside *Tuhfe* manuscripts from private collections and other libraries, it becomes clear that the 18th century was, in many respects, the century of the *Tuhfe-i Šāhidī* in Ottoman Bosnia.

Many copies the *Tuhfe-i Šāhidī* were brought to Bosnia in addition to the ones produced locally. The work was widely used for its original purposes— as a source of Persian vocabulary and an introductory manual for prosody. Today, the Gazi Husrev Beg Library and other manuscript collections in Bosnia and Herzegovina hold many copies of the *Tuhfe* produced in various madrasas across the region. Most originated from the Gazi Husrev Beg Madrasa³¹ and Feyziye Madrasa in Travnik.³² One copy (GHB R-1407) was produced in the Đumišić (Sīnzāde) Madrasa in Sarajevo, while several others, formerly housed in the Oriental Institute's now-destroyed collection, were likewise copied in Sarajevo madrasas.³³

²⁹ One autograph copy of Šejh Jujo's commentary was once held in the collection of the Oriental Institute. Cf. Trako, *Katalog perzijskih rukopisa*, 100. Two additional codices preserved in the Gazi Husrev-Bey Library in Sarajevo contain records clearly identifying Ejubović himself as the copyist. Cf. R-1301, R-2161. In addition to his commentary on the *Tuhfe*, Ejubović is well known as a prolific author in Arabic, with a marked tendency to copy his own works. Indeed, a significant portion of his extant manuscripts are in his own hand.

³⁰ Cf. Fehim Nametak, *Katalog arapskih, turskih, perzijskih i bosanskih rukopisa Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke u Sarajevu* (Sarajevo: GHB, 1998).

³¹ E.g. R-1257, R-1711, R-2436, R-2492, R-7555 from the Gazi Husrev Beg collection.

³² R-3538, R-1991, R-882, R-538, R-1301, among others.

³³ A codice no. OIS 1965 from the Oriental Institute, copied at the Atmeydanı madrasa in Sarajevo, codice no. 1622 with a *Tuhfe-i Šāhidī* manuscript copied at the Iskenderije madrasa in Sarajevo, and another one no. OIS 576 copied in the Bistrik madrasa in Sarajevo. See: Trako, *Katalog perzijskih rukopisa*, 83, 101; Ždralović, *Prepisivači djela u arabičkim rukopisima II*, 143, 197.

A notable portion of surviving codices combine two works together: the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* and *Pandnāme*.³⁴ These two manuals of Persian literacy, often read and studied in sequence, became parts of the curriculum in many Ottoman madrasas in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 18th century. While some copies date to the early 18th century, the majority of the existing copies of the *Tuhfe* and *Pandnāme* were produced between the mid-18th and early 19th centuries. This timeline aligns with Nebī Efendizāde's note in his *Qaṣīde fī al-kutub al-mashhūra fī al-ʿulūm*, identifying the *Tuhfe* and *Pandnāme* as essential manuals for beginners in Persian. His advice clearly resonated in Bosnia.

Many manuscripts of the *Tuhfe* preserved in Bosnian libraries feature notes and glosses in the margins, most frequently in Arabic and Turkish, and more rarely in Persian. Of particular interest, however, are the marginal notes in Bosnian, which give these copies a distinctive local character within the broader Ottoman context and testify to their active use by students.³⁵ The Oriental Institute in Sarajevo once held at least a dozen such annotated manuscripts from the late 18th and early 19th centuries.³⁶ It is reasonable to assume that others once existed in private collections or have been permanently lost.

Most copies of *Tuhfe* in Bosnian collections are simple, plain texts copied for educational purposes and display largely similar characteristics. As a representative example, we may consider GHB R-2681/2 (Appendix 3), copied by a relatively known scribe named Şālīḥ b. Şaʿbān Onogoštevi (Nikshiklī) in 1208/1794. A graduate of the Đumišić (Sīnzāde) Madrasa in Sarajevo, Şālīḥ spent most of his life in the city and produced dozens of manuscripts across various disciplines. His output includes a copy of Meḥmed Hevāyī Uskūfī's Bosnian–Turkish verse dictionary *Maḵbūl-i ʿĀrif*, the dictionary *Baḥr al-ġarāʾib* (GHB, R-3053, dated 1217/1802), a commentary on the *Tuhfe* (GHB, R-1407, dated 1203/1788), and *Muḥtār al-ṣiḥāḥ* (GHB, R-245, dated 1212/1797). His sustained interest in lexicography is evident throughout his work. While still a student in the madrasa, he penned several codices on various topics in 1206/1792. Judging by that, Şālīḥ's copy of the *Tuhfe*, penned two years before that date, was made while he was still a student at the Đumišić madrasa. Unlike other copies of the *Tuhfe*, which feature vocabulary in Arabic, Turkish, and Bosnian in their margins, this particular manuscript contains notes only in Bosnian. Although some Bosnian equivalents of the *Tuhfe* vocabulary are of Oriental origin (e.g., *aḥṣām*, *aḥmak*, *ḳuvetli*, *maşriḳ*, *mağrib*, *şāḥibiya* [yednoy stvari], *pesinluk*), these are few compared to

³⁴ Among those manuscripts are: R-6473/1-2, R-1983/1-2, R-5342/1-2, R-6835/1-2, R-2681/1-2, R-5595/1-2, R-7093/1-2 from the Gazi Husrev Beg Library, and manuscripts 4431/1-2, 2722/1-2, 2633/1-2 from the Oriental Institute collection.

³⁵ See manuscripts R-2681/2, R-5595/2, R-7093/2, R-9736/2 in the Gazi Husrev Beg Library. In each of them, the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* is copied together with *Pandnāma*, confirming its use in learning the Persian language.

³⁶ OIS 576, 2383/2, 1266/1, 1622/2, 2657/1, 1171, 4687/2, 3903, 3407 and 1185. For a short description of each, see: Trako, *Katalog perzijskih rukopisa*, 76–102.

the total number of words recorded in the margins. This suggests a deliberate effort on his part to use native Bosnian terms to explain Persian and Turkish entries.

In this copy, the hundreds of words translated into Bosnian in the margins are interesting from several perspectives, including the choice of specific Bosnian terms and the orthographic solutions employed during a pre-standardization period.³⁷ Particularly significant are the occasional attempts to translate complete verses appearing in the margins. Each chapter of the dictionary contains a verse in Persian, followed by an Ottoman Turkish translation, and the copyist attempted to translate these verses into Bosnian as well. For example, the closing verse of the first chapter reads in Turkish and Persian: *Bu sözimi ezber it gönlüñüñ aç pasını / İn suhanam yād kun, jang-i dilat mīzudāy*. In the margin, the Bosnian copyist added: *ovu besjedu ezbelejši*.³⁸ His skill as a translator is even better demonstrated in the concluding couplet of the second chapter: *Ey shah-i hūbān-i ġahān marḥabā* ("Welcome, oh queen of the beauties of the world"), which he rendered in Bosnian as:

Ej padišahu lijepije obraza,
Na ovome svijetu seadet ola
[Oh the queen of the beauties of the world,
In this world: seadet ola]³⁹

The use of Šāhidī's dictionary persisted well into the 19th century, as evidenced by the continued interest in its transcription. The work remained in demand until the mid-19th century, with the Gazi Husrev Beg Library collection holding more than twenty transcriptions from this period.⁴⁰ However, 19th-century manuscripts reveal that the text's use in Bosnia was accompanied by significant challenges. Many copies contained numerous orthographical errors. Following the Tanzimat reforms, new textbooks began to replace the *Tuḥfe-i Šāhidī*.

Copies of the *Tuḥfe* were produced in numerous madrasas across major Bosnian cities such as Sarajevo, Mostar, Travnik, and Konjic. Some of these faithfully reflect the challenges inherent in using this dictionary in the educational system. A particularly revealing example is a manuscript of the *Tuḥfe* copied by Husein Efendi in 1224/1809 (GHB R-1992) (Appendix 4). The only verifiable information about him is that he served as a müderris in Travnik, central Bosnia. His manuscript contains numerous marginal and

³⁷ Most of these points would be of interest to specialists in the history of the Bosnian language and its orthography. For some examples, see Appendix 3 at the end of this article.

³⁸ Fol. 5b.

³⁹ Fol. 6a. The English translation by the authors.

⁴⁰ R-1122, R-8311, R-5447, R-5035, R-4800, R-1044, R-5532, R-1992, R-7122, R-543, R-4229, R-6768/1, R-4667, R-1991, R-1331, R-7629/1, R-7809, R-7585, R-1041, R-257, R-2924, R-6194, R-8311.

interlinear notes indicating which words are Persian and which are Turkish, alongside translations into Arabic. This suggests that Arabic was more familiar to him than either Turkish or Persian. From his annotations, it is evident that recognizing vocabulary and identifying its origins posed significant challenges for the copyist and his students, as they were unfamiliar with both Persian and Turkish. Husein Efendi seems not to have fully understood the methodology Şāhidī employed in composing his dictionary and was clearly unfamiliar with a substantial portion of its vocabulary. Any folio from his copy would readily prove these points. In folio 5b, for instance, certain words appear in different ink colors, reflecting the copyist's attempt to distinguish Persian vocabulary from Turkish, one set written in red ink, the other in black. The result, however, is a haphazard application of colors, serving more as a decoration than as an effective learning aid. It is difficult to imagine how such a copy of the *Tuhfe* could have been of practical use, making it an eloquent example of the challenges involved in preparing and acquiring course materials in madrasas on the Empire's westernmost frontier. Most Bosnian madrasas, particularly those outside Sarajevo, ranked lower in status, with both teachers and students drawn mainly from the local population.

Even after the Austria-Hungary occupation of Bosnia in 1878, the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* continued to be used; however, the reliance on old Ottoman textbooks and the teaching of Persian increasingly came under criticism. A local magazine article from 1891, for instance, condemned the outdated methodology, describing the material as overly burdensome for *rüşdiye* students. The anonymous author complained that pupils were expected to read and translate "philosophical books" such as Sa'dī's *Gulistān* and to "learn Turkish-Persian dictionaries in verse by heart."⁴¹ The tone signaled the spirit of a new era in education, one shaped by changing needs. Simple in structure, multi-purpose, and easy to memorize, the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* had outlived many other Ottoman textbooks, remaining in use even after the educational reforms of the mid-19th century. Yet the very qualities that had ensured its popularity now rendered it obsolete in modernized Bosnian education. "Learning by heart" a centuries-old work that no longer met the demands of new social circumstances became yet another argument for relegating Şāhidī's book to where it had always truly belonged—within the Ottoman cultural tradition.

⁴¹ *Bošnjak*, 7, no. 1 (13 August 1891): 1–2. Similarly, in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, students often lacked the ability to understand their Arabic and Persian language courses and were therefore compelled to memorize the textbooks mechanically. See: Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Ottoman Islamic Education in the Balkans in the Nineteenth Century," *Islamic Studies* 36, no. 2/3 (Special issue: Islam in the Balkans, 1997): 439–64.

IV. The Significance of the *Tuhfe* Copies in a Broader Cultural Context

The significance of marginalia in Bosnian found in these manuscripts cannot be fully appreciated solely through lexicological study. These notes also speak to a wider societal context, particularly in the period when most Bosnian copies of the *Tuhfe* were produced. Modelling his Bosnian-Turkish dictionary in verse upon the *Tuhfe*, Mehmed Hevāyī Uskūfī demonstrated how the *Tuhfe* archetype could be successfully adapted for compiling dictionaries of other languages within the Empire. As such, Uskūfī's dictionary can be regarded as the first example of adapting the *Tuhfe* to another language within the Empire, marking a shift toward local vernaculars alongside, rather than exclusively within, the three Oriental cosmopolitan languages of the Ottoman realm.⁴²

The second half of the 18th and the early decades of the 19th century, when most copies of Šāhidī's dictionary in Bosnia were made, particularly those with Bosnian translation of the vocabulary, coincided with other significant developments in the history of Bosnian language. This was the period when Muḥamed Rāẓī Velihodžić (d. 1786), an intellectual and advocate of basic religious education in local languages, lived and worked.⁴³ He is credited with being the first to attempt composing religious materials in Bosnian.⁴⁴ Another prominent figure of this era was Abdulvehab Ilhami Žepčak (d. 1821), who not only employed Bosnian in his writings but also explicitly defended its use, urging others to follow his example in the following manner:

*Ne smijte se, naš je jezik
Kalem piše svaki jezik
Božji rahmet sasma velik
Molim vam se, učite*⁴⁵

No place for laughter; the tongue is ours
Kalem records every language equally
God's mercy is all-encompassing
I plead to you, get learned and study

In short, the presence of Bosnian in extant copies of Šāhidī's dictionary was by no means an isolated phenomenon among learned circles. Aspirations for providing religious education

⁴² Cf. Michiel Leezenberg, "Vernacularisation in the Ottoman Empire: Is Arabic Exception that Proves the Rule?", in: Esther Miryam-Wagner (ed.), *A Handbook and Reader of Ottoman Arabic* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 6.

⁴³ Cf. Muhamed Huković, *Alhamijado književnost i njeni stvaraoci* (Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1986), 114–115.

⁴⁴ Mehmed Handžić, "Rad bosanskohercegovačkih muslimana na književnom polju", in: *Teme iz književne historije* (Ogledalo, Sarajevo, 1999), 418–419.

⁴⁵ Cf. Zubčević, *Book Ownership*, 84–85.

in the local vernacular can be observed among other Balkan communities during the same period. Among the Serbs, popular reformers and educators such as Dositej Obradović (d. 1811) and, somewhat later, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (d. 1864) played an active role in this regard. Towards the end of the 18th century, the first attempts to compose religious texts in Bulgarian emerged, while among the Greeks, the gradual shift from ecclesiastical Greek toward a more colloquial form of the language led to the emergence of diglossia.⁴⁶

Similar tendencies were also visible in Ottoman Asia, particularly among the Kurds. As Leezenberg notes, the first grammatical sketch of the Kurdish language was produced in the 18th century, and this brief work was incorporated into the local madrasa curriculum.⁴⁷ In the same period, the late 18th and early 19th centuries- Turkish-Albanian, Turkish-Greek and Turkish-Bulgarian dictionaries were composed, all modelled on the *Tuhfe*. When considered alongside the existing adaptations of the *Tuhfe* into Arabic and several European languages, a fuller picture emerges of its appeal to diverse linguistic audiences both within and beyond the Empire. Viewed in the broader context of the struggles of various people in the Ottoman Empire for education in their vernacular languages, the Bosnian marginalia in *Tuhfe* manuscripts acquire new significance. It is also worth noting that Bosnian madrasas were generally of lower rank and catered predominantly to Bosnian students. While the formal textbooks for religious education were in Arabic and Turkish and less frequently in Persian, it is reasonable to assume that Bosnian served as the main language of instruction.⁴⁸

The translation of the *Tuhfe* vocabulary into Bosnian was primarily motivated by practical considerations, chiefly to facilitate the learning process, rather than driven by nationalist impulses originating from outside Bosnia. This conclusion is based on the fact that the vernacularization of the education in Bosnia did not begin at the end of the 18th century, as was the case among neighboring Balkan peoples. In Bosnia, it began in the early 17th century and continued, with varying degrees of intensity, until the late 19th century. The extant copies of the *Tuhfe* reflect these phases faithfully. This particular case of vernacularization in Bosnia should not be interpreted solely within the context of the broader 18th century trend in the Balkans, when national sentiments began to emerge and consolidate.⁴⁹ Bosnian madrasas and their instructors sought to keep pace with the trends

⁴⁶ Cf. Michiel Leezenberg, "The Vernacular Revolution: Reclaiming Early Modern Grammatical Traditions in the Ottoman Empire", *History of Humanities*, no. 1/2 (2016), 260; Leezenberg, "Vernacularisation in the Ottoman Empire", 2–3.

⁴⁷ Cf. Michiel Leezenberg, Eli Teremaxi and the Vernacularization of Medrese Learning in Kurdistan", *Iranian Studies* 47, no. 5, 2014, 713–733. However, a Kurdish-Arabic verse dictionary entitled *Nûbehara Bîçûkan* (Children Springtime) written in 1683 seems to predate the timeframe offered by Leezenberg. See Mustafa Öztürk, "Manzum Sözlüklerden Sübha-i Sıbyân ile Kürtçe'deki İlk Manzum Sözlük Nûbehara Bîçûkan Arasında Bir Karşılaştırma", *The Journal of Mesopotamian Studies*, c. 1/1, Yaz 2016, 1–32.

⁴⁸ Cf. Zubčević, *Book Ownership in Ottoman Sarajevo*, 87.

⁴⁹ The struggle for education in local languages in Bosnia persisted throughout the 19th century, meeting strong resistance from advocates of instruction in Turkish and Arabic. Following the Habsburg annexation and the reopening of schools, the Bosniac intelligentsia pressed for educational autonomy, while some members of the learned elite continued to call for

established in Istanbul and other major cities of the Empire. This is clearly illustrated in the case of Nebī Efendizāde's *Kaṣīde fī el-kütub al-meṣhūre fī el-'ulūm* (1750), in which the use of Ṣāhidī's dictionary and the *Pandnāme* was explicitly encouraged. In the following decades, the number of *Tuḥfe* copies produced in Bosnia increased. Further research into textual sources such as inheritance records and other widely used textbooks would likely reinforce this conclusion. The case of the *Tuḥfe-i Ṣāhidī* in Bosnia and Herzegovina thus offers a valuable lens through which to examine the processes of vernacularization in Ottoman Bosnia and, more broadly, across the Balkans.

Conclusion

As attested by numerous manuscripts, the *Tuḥfe-i Ṣāhidī* was a highly sought-after text in Ottoman Bosnia. More importantly, the paratextual material found in many of these manuscripts underlines its close association with vernacular literacy from the early 17th to the late 19th century, whether in the sphere of lexicography or in educational practice in the Bosnian language. Its local use and status thus shed new light on the linguistic ecology of the Ottoman Empire and the role of vernaculars within it.

In Ottoman Bosnia, language use was broadly divided between two social groups. The educated elite sought integration into a wider Ottoman imperial culture through reading and writing in the *Elsine-i Selāse*, while 'ordinary' people communicated in the vernacular. Madrasa students occupied an intermediate position: most entered without prior knowledge of the imperial languages and aimed to master them during their studies in order to join the elite circles. The continued use and frequent copying of an elementary coursebook like the *Tuḥfe-i Ṣāhidī* throughout the Ottoman period reveals the challenges and difficulties students faced in the process.

More importantly, the marginal notes preserved in numerous Bosnian copies of the *Tuḥfe-i Ṣāhidī* challenge the long-standing assumption that the development of vernaculars in the Ottoman Empire, often linked to the rise of nationalisms, was driven primarily by foreign influences from Western Europe or Russia. The recorded history of three centuries of Bosnian glosses in a single coursebook demonstrates that this practice arose from a practical need to facilitate comprehension, rather than from an effort to distance oneself from the *Elsine-i Selāse*. In short, this provides strong evidence that the process of vernacularization unfolded largely within the framework of Ottoman cultural sphere and was not chiefly induced from outside.

textbooks to be written and printed in Arabic and Turkish. These positions reflected an entirely different set of social and political orientations and circumstances. Cf. Muhamed Hadžijahić, *Od tradicije do identiteta: geneza nacionalnog pitanja bosanskih muslimana* (Zagreb: Islamska zajednica, 1990), 107, 127.

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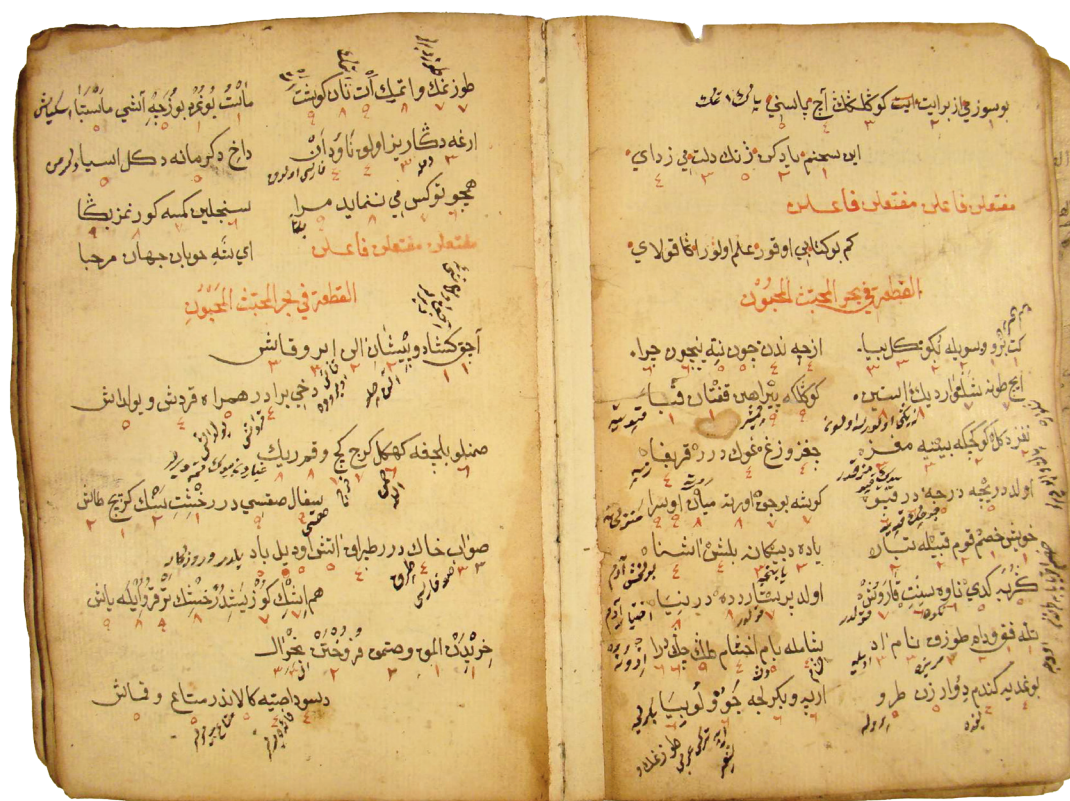
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Appendix 1. Gazi Husrev Beg Library Sarajevo, R-9693/3: A *Tuḥfe-i Šāhidī* manuscript copied in 1035/1625, containing various glosses in Bosnian.



Appendix 2. Gazi Husrev Beg Library Sarajevo, R-2573: *Hulle-i Manzūme*, a commentary on the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* by Bosnian Muştafā Ejubović, Šejh Jujo (autograph, copied in 1110/1698).



Appendix 3. Gazi Husrev Beg Library Sarajevo, R-2681/3: A *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī* manuscript copied by Šālih b. Sha 'bān Onogoshtevī (Nikshikli) in 1208/1794, containing numerous translations into Bosnian.



Appendix 4. Gazi Husrev Beg Library Sarajevo, R-1992: A 19th-century Bosnian copy of the *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī*.

