

“NISAB AL-SIBYAN” - THE FIRST EXAMPLE OF A BILINGUAL LEXICON IN POETIC FORM

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Abstract

This article analyzes “Nisab al-Sibyan”, a work that holds an important place in the history of Eastern lexicography. This dictionary, which includes both Arabic and Persian words, stands out for being composed in poetic form – a distinctive phenomenon in the history of lexicography. The study examines its structure, pedagogical significance, and role in medieval education for children. Moreover, the article explores the influence of “Nisab al-Sibyan” on later bilingual and encyclopedic dictionaries in the East.

Keywords

Nisab al-Sibyan, poetic lexicon, bilingual dictionary, Eastern lexicography, child education, Persian-Tajik literature, Arabic language, medieval lexicography

Introduction. The history of Eastern lexicography is ancient and rich in tradition. The close scholarly and cultural relationship between the Arabic and Persian languages during the medieval period led to the creation of numerous bilingual dictionaries. One of the most remarkable examples of this legacy is “Nisab al-Sibyan”, considered one of the first poetic bilingual dictionaries written for children. The work was compiled to facilitate the learning of Arabic by students. The vocabulary is presented in rhymed couplets, which made the memorization process easier. This method reflects not only linguistic creativity but also the development of pedagogical methodology in the medieval East. “Nisab al-Sibyan” later served as a foundation for the creation of subsequent dictionaries and educational materials.

Significance of the Work. Bilingual dictionaries have played a crucial role in the history of Eastern literature and lexicography. They served as effective tools for students learning Arabic and for scholars engaged in cultural communication. Nisab al-Sibyan is historically significant as the first bilingual dictionary written in poetic form. Each Arabic word is accompanied by its Persian equivalent, structured in rhyming verses. This poetic arrangement helped learners to memorize words

more quickly and made the learning process more engaging. The use of poetic form demonstrates that educational methods based on rhythm and rhyme were already applied in medieval pedagogy. Thus, "Nisab al-Sibyan" is valuable not only as a linguistic resource but also as an early example of poetic pedagogy in the Islamic world.

Linguistic and Methodological Aspects. The work integrates Arabic vocabulary with Persian explanations, thereby facilitating easier memorization. The poetic style stimulated learners' interest in language acquisition and made the process enjoyable. For this reason, "Nisab al-Sibyan" is regarded as an important methodological source for studying the history of language teaching in the medieval East. Later bilingual dictionaries, such as those by Ibn Fityan and Ahmad ibn Faqih, were influenced by this work. In this sense, "Nisab al-Sibyan" marked a new stage in the evolution of lexicography and pedagogy in the East.

Conclusion. Nisab al-Sibyan occupies a unique and notable place in the history of medieval Eastern lexicography and education. Through its poetic structure and bilingual format, it became an effective tool for language learning and a methodological innovation for its time. The work influenced the development of later lexicons, textbooks, and teaching methods, and remains an important source for modern research in lexicography and educational methodology. Today, "Nisab al-Sibyan" continues to be a valuable reference for linguistic, literary, and pedagogical studies.

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