



LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF EPIC FORMULAS BETWEEN WESTERN EPOS AND SHĀHNĀME



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ABSTRACT

By comparing the linguistic structure of epithets in Shahname with the same structures in literary works of classical Western epic tradition, many similarities can be achieved, all of which indicate a common cultural and linguistic tradition among Indo-European peoples based upon similar functions in semiotics. One of the most important features of Shahname, which is comparable linguistically to classical epos, is the epic formulas. These elements are often accompanied by repetition and emphasis and appear frequently in order to form the epic effect. The history of epic formulas in classical Western literature dates back to Homer; the linguistic functions of epic formulas also play an important role in Ferdowsi's Shahname, but their prevalence differs from that of Homer and Virgil in terms of the prosodic structure and literary traditions prevalent in Persian epics. One of the common ways to use the epic formulas is inserting epithets as the titles and attributes that come after the names of the heroes; in these structures with the aid of repetition, the writer increase the effect of speech on the audience. In the present article, we have tried to measure the linguistic effects of the application of epic formulas in Western literature compared to Ferdowsi's masterpiece as the supreme model of Persian epic. In our interdisciplinary approach we aimed to analyse the various functionalities of these structures particularly from the perspective of discourse analysis.

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Literature review

When dealing with epicism and the linguistic aspects of this genre, the bibliography that one faces is extremely vast; but it is still possible to identify the origin of the studies specifically related to Homeric poetry in Milman Parry, who, as universally acknowledged, has been one of the most incisive scholars to deal with epithets. As Stanford states: “extraordinary singleness of purpose is the quality that strikes one first in considering the total *corpus* of Milman Parry’s work [...]”.

He concerned himself almost entirely with the style of the Homeric poems” and “established a new order in the whole territory of those much-disputed poems. After his death his Epigonoï developed his conquests and a new age in the study of early Greek epic poetry had begun” (Stanford 36). After Parry, many scholars such as Hainsworth developed the topic and offered different perspectives on it, whilst scholars such as Hoekstra, Graziosi-Haubold and Foley are highly recommended for an overview on the main theses regarding the Homeric style and formulae as well as Nagy’s essay for what concerns the psychological aspects of the Homeric narration.

The texts cited merely concern Homer’s work while scholars such as Shafi’i Kadkani, Khaleghi Motlagh and others have dealt with this subject solely in the context of Persian literature. So far no systematic study has compared the question of formulaic epithets in *Shahname* from a linguistic, rhetorical and comparative point of view.

Research method

In this research, the method of comparative and historical study has been used; Thus, the evolutionary history of the transformation of epic constructions in three languages, Persian, Latin and Greek, has been done

based on the analysis of textual evidence, especially from the collection of epic works attributed to Homer, *Shahnameh* and the *Aeneis* of Virgil. The study of multilingual evidences has been done based on the criteria of historical linguistics and comparative textual studies, by selection and analysis of about ten thousand sample verses. It should be noted that in the process phase of the text selected as a sample, repeated structures are considered as unique witnesses. The basis of comparative linguistic assessment in this article is *Shahnameh* and other literary works have been considered as subsidiary.

Discourse and Analysis

The main objective of this paper is to determine the importance of formulaic expressions from a comparative perspective that takes into account the widely known epic works of Homer, Virgil and Ferdowsi. In order to draw a parallelism between the Persian masterpiece and the classical epic poems it is necessary to point out some core aspects that differentiate the two categories and yet do not hinder a comparison. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* belong to an ancient tradition of epic poetry whose purpose was to celebrate the mythological deeds of gods and men. These poems became models for later works such as the *Aeneid* and for their exemplary function they will be the main focus of this discussion and the reference point for analysing Ferdowsi’s *Book of Kings*. The language adopted by the epic genre as well as its compositional technique is deeply tied with the concept of quantitative metrics. The rhythm of the Homeric and Virgilian narration is scanned on the structure of the hexameter whose criteria of formation is the quantity of each syllable. The hexameter consists of six feet - uu | -uu | -uu | -uu | -uu | --, each one made up of a long syllable (spondee) combined

with two short syllables (dactyls) that can be replaced with a long one, except for the sixth foot which is always consisting of two long syllables. This means that depending on the words chosen to complete the verse, there will be a calmer pace if there is an abundance of spondees (e.g. *Il.* 2.544) or a more rapid one in case that dactyls prevail (e.g. *Il.* 6, 113), resulting in a kaleidoscope of emotions such as peacefulness, drama, celerity, anxiety, leading to increasing public involvement given the constant underlying rhythmicity. Moreover, due to the impossibility to pronounce an entire hexametric line in one breath, there are specific spaces where breaks can be located (the “feminine” caesura after the first short syllable of the third foot; the “masculine” caesura after the first long syllable of the same foot; the “hepthemimeral” after the first long syllable of the fourth foot).

The existence of three breaks results in the division of the verse into four *cola*. This structure not only sheds light on the extremely elastic compositional structure of the hexameter but also carries deep implications in terms of the choices that the bard could make to complete the verse, since that depending on the caesura there were words/syntagmas/phrases that could help the poet to fill in a given metric unit (*colon*). Such assumption provides sufficient evidence of a close relationship between lexicon and meter: whereas the poet could draw from a well-established stock of phrases with a determined metrical structure, his composition could be facilitated as well as its memorization. This can be seen in *Iliad*'s book 2, where the poet, before launching into the Catalogue of the Ship, asks for divine support: he cannot recall the names of leaders and commanders unless the Muses of Olympus, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus, remembered all of those who came to Ilios:

εἰ μὴ Ὀλυμπιάδες Μοῦσαι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο
 θυγατέρες μνησαίαθ' ὅσοι ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθον
 (*Il.* 1. 8-9)

The poet is aware of the difficulty of remembering many lines and this is why he both asks for a divine aid and intervenes autonomously by employing fix syntagmas (such as “daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus”) to complete a line. This stock of phrases the bard could draw from are called formulae. Now that the necessary clarifications on the research conducted so far on the metric and functional aspects of the formulae have been made, we can proceed to deal with the core of the issue. Epic formulas are structures that are repeated in classical epic works and evolve the epic of the text with the help of their repeated order. The first and most common type of epic formula is epithet (which derived from Greek ἐπίθετος made from the verb τίθημι meaning attributed, added), therefore this name is chosen because the epithet is always added to or placed instead of the names of prominent characters of the epic (Zingarelli, 637). Epithets often come after the names of the main characters and describe them in some way, indicating either genealogy (patronymic), a quality or a mythological reference.

Based on ancient rhetoric definitions these epithets and titles are used as emphasis and ornament (Ornatus) meaning that if eliminated there wouldn't be a missing in basic form of discourse. In other words, epithets have no semantic obligation and are numbered as in addition to speech, not its basic structure (Della Corte 45). An essential feature of an epithet is the fact that it is always repeated and the repetition of epic titles in Homer is due to the fact that the two epic books attributed to him, were first in the form of oral narrations, and even after Homer has composed and arranged them, they were mostly narrated orally, as a

result of lacking writing equipment in that era. Epithets, therefore, are always repeated because they could be effective in remembering the poem and its ease of narration.

Formulae help the bard composing poetry in real time, as Milman Parry and Albert Lord irrefutably demonstrated by recording the performances of Bosnian guslari, with the aim of formulating the theory on the oral composition of the Homeric poems after the comparison with the Serbian oral tradition studied by Murko in 1929. These comparative studies led to the conclusion that bards could memorise and hand down very long poems thanks to the adoption and repetition of numerous formulae. Cf. also Lord 2018 and Walden 2021 who focus on oral tradition and epithets.

On the other hand, epithets actually create a kind of inner rhyme and tone of speech and they enhance the musical quality of the poem, thus making the epic's effect on audience more constant.

The most common way to use these titles is to make an attribute from the father's name (patronymic), for example Achilles is often called Pleiades, since he is the son of Pleus:

μη̄νιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος (*Il.* I, 1)

O poetry's divinity sing me of Pleiades Achilles (the son of Peleus).

The description of persons in the name of their father, which indicates the validity of race and originality among the ancient Greeks, is also applied to the gods. For example, Zeus, Cronid: The son of Cronus, is read:

ὦ πάτερ ἡμέτερε Κρονίδη, ὕπατε κρείοντων (*Od.* I, 45)

O Cronid (the son of Cronus) our father, thee who is king of all imperial

The description of the power of Zeus in Latin has also become an epithet, and Jupiter has often been referred to as “*pater omnipotens*” in the classical books of that language. (cf. for example *Aen.* VI, v. 592, VII, v. 141, VII, v. 770, X, v. 100, VIII, v. 398, I, v. 60, IV, v. 25). Another type of attributives is based on physical appearance or combat skills and even mental abilities, for example Achilles is often called πόδας ὠκύς Ἀχιλλεύς swift feet (cf. for example *Il.* I, 58; I, 85; I, 148; IX, 196; IX, 643; XI, 112; XVIII, 187), and Athena which is alike Minerva in Roman, is called glaucopis γλαυκῶπις meaning blue eyed (cf. for example *Il.* I, 206; II, 166; II, 446; V, 133; *Od.* I, 44; I, 319; III, 330) and the title of Odysseus (Ulysses) is the man of a thousand tricks πολύτροπος (*Od.* I, 1, X, 330). Thus, it can be seen that in the epic formulas that have been used to describe deities and God-like heroes, there is a kind of anthropomorphism. The same tradition has continued in Aeneid, based on Virgil's imitation of Homer, but the Latin poet mostly focused on innovating the aspect of the dramatization of epic titles.

La Penna, in his great article ‘Virgil and the Crisis of the Ancient World’, refers to the dramatic discourse of Aeneid with these words: "the art of poetry in Hellenistic and neoteric narrative forms suggested theories to fundamentally create epic which is renewed in every aspect compared with Homer's style. It is about paying attention to the psychological, emotional and inner motivations of the action after the tragic experience, and leaving Homer's tangible and extroverted style for the poet's emotional participation which is sometimes very evident in direct interventions and eloquent intentions. Thereby Virgil is one of the great narrative and dramatic poets." (La Penna LI) When analysing epithets in Virgil, it can be seen that one of the most common

titles used in Aeneid is Pius meaning pious; this title is in fact the main sign and description of Aeneas, the immanent hero of the book:

At pius Aeneas, per noctem plurima
volvens,
ut primum lux alma data est, exire locosque
(*Aen.* I, 305)

The pious Aeneas who was very agitated that night, at dawn decided to leave ... Aeneas's lover Dido for she has an agonizing destiny and is troubled with love's catastrophe, is called unhappy (*infelix*). This kind of title (epithet) is used by emotional means and is of Virgil's innovations:

Infelix Dido, uerus mihi nuntius ergo
uenerat extinctam ferroque extrema
secutam? (*Aen.* VI, 456-457)

Unhappy Dido according to what is told to me, is it true that you have killed yourself by sharp blade?

Having dealt with epithets in western epic, we can focus on epic formulas in the form of epithets in Ferdowsi's masterpiece. Before deepening the topic, it should be noted that in *Shahnameh* epithets are not repeated much as in many classic works of Western epics like *Aeneid* indeed, in fact titles given to the heroes are often used in the form of identical metaphors and not next to their names, but instead of names. And such use of epithets is very few, compared to voluminosity of *Shahnameh* and in comparison with similar works of Greece and Rome, especially the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*. The use of the father's name as an epic formula is also common in the *Shahnameh* and often occurs in the form of a genitive known as patronym, in phrases such as *Sām-e Narimān*, *Sām-e Dastān*, *Bahrām-e Goodarz*:

تو پور گو پیلتن رستمی

زدستان سامی و از نیرمی (فردوسی، ج ۲، ص ۳۰۵)

زواره فرامرزو دستان سام

بزرگان که هستند با جاه و نام. (فردوسی، ج ۴، ص ۵۲۲)

In *Shahnameh*, heroic epithets that refer to the outstanding abilities and physical characteristics of heroes are repeated, but due to limitations by cause of metre and rhyme in the poetry, the poet uses epic titles and formulas only in cases where the harmony of the poetry wouldn't be impaired. This is why Ferdowsi's epithets are not fixed, unlike Homer and Virgil, and he is forced to change them to maintain metre and rhyme in poetry. But there is no rhyme in classical Latin and Greek poetry, and the poet can repeat the epithets more easily. For example, this is why there is not much description and epithet in the *Shahnameh* for the name Siyāvash (pronounced siavash-osh), but if we choose the pronunciation Siavūsh for this name, it is easier to use a single-syllable attributive (such as *gord*, *niv*) after the name.

The study of this difference between the prevalence of epithets in Ferdowsi and the classical epic must be done by offering further considerations on the metrical structures of Latin, Greek and Persian poetry. In his book *The Art of Poetry*, Aristotle considers the hexameter to be the most appropriate metre for an epic poetry:

τὸ δὲ μέτρον τὸ ἥρωικὸν ἀπὸ τῆς πείρας ἤρμοκεν. εἰ γὰρ τις ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ μέτρῳ διηγηματικὴν μίμησιν ποιοῖτο ἢ ἐν πολλοῖς, ἀπρεπὲς ἂν φαίνοιτο· τὸ γὰρ ἥρωικὸν στασιμώτατον καὶ ὀγκωδέστατον τῶν μέτρων ἐστίν.

(Aristotle, *Ars poetica*, 1459b)

Based on experience hexameter is much more suitable for epic poetry's meter, as said

above, because narrations seem unpleasant in different meters or in so many other meters; thereby hexameter is the most reasonable and dignified meter. Ennius has first used the hexameter, which had a long history in ancient Greek poetry, extensively in Latin poetry, and this led to the prevalence of this form in later centuries (Riposati, p. 38). Latin poets, after using the saturnian metre form, found it unsuitable for the epic poetry and following Aristotle's advice and the common prosodic meter of Greek poetry, turned to the use of hexameters in Latin (Di Sacco, p. 189).

With knowledge of the quantitative characteristics of Greek and Latin meter, it is possible that the poet could use various epithets according to the necessity of order and number of syllables, as previously said, and, of course, according to the semantic fit, which is why, for example, the epithets after the name of Odysseus often begin with the prefix *polu* meaning very much, so as not to impair the syllable system on which Greek poetry is based, for example:

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον (*Od.*
I, v. 1)

O Muse sing for me of the man of many journey

Unlike Greek and Latin metrics, for which the origin is certain, the Persian poetry's metre has been the subject of much debate. Vahidian Kamyar writes about the Persian poetry's metre and the *mutaqārib* metre used in *Shahnameh*: "Taha Hossein has declared in the book *Men al-hadis al sh'er va al-nasr* (about narration of poetry and prose) that all of the Persian composed poetry are based on Arabic poetry's metre, and the *Shahname*, which is one of the national glories of Persians and one of the world's literary masterpieces, is arranged based on the *mutaqārib* meter, the Arabian metrical structure. It is clear that Taha

Hossein's declaration is not based on research and is just repeating unskilled orientalist's statements who mistook the similarities in names of metrical structures and terms in Persian and Arabic languages and considered them to conclude that Persian poetry metric system is derived from Arabic metric systems, while among all of the Persian meters only six metrical structures are the same as Arabic poetry's meters, and also with vast differences in poetic authorities and of course this amount of similarity in metrical structures which have a common basic form by linguistic necessity is quite natural, besides the metrical structure of *Shahname* (u – – | u – – | u – – | u –) does not exist in Arab metrical structures. "(Vahidian Kamyar 27)

Apart from the controversy surrounding the origin of Persian poetry, it can be said that this metre is very similar to the Latin and Greek quantitative meters, and in any case this fact could not be doubted with Persian poetry's origin of emersion. Thus, in using epithets such as Homer, Virgil, and other classical poets, Ferdowsi also considered their metrical structures and the effect they might have on its rhyming, and as a cause inevitably modified them, but the main difference between classical Greek and Latin poetry and the metrical structure of prosody used in *Shahname* is the absence of use of rhyme in classical poetry and its constant presence in Ferdowsi's speech.

There is basically no rhyme in classical Western epic poetry, while according to the tradition of Persian poetry, Ferdowsi is required to observe rhymes and therefore his use of epithets has become more limited.

The most widely used epithets in *Shahname* are *gaw*, *gord*, *niw*, *yal*, *nāmdār*. These epithets as has been mentioned can be used due to consideration of metrical structure and the necessity of rhyme; For example, the adjective *niw* is often mentioned after Farhād's name, and this word is rhymed with

the name *Giw*, therefore both a description is mentioned for *Farhād* and a rhyme is obtained for *Giw* according to the method of formulation.

A name such as *Keshvād* is mentioned after *Goodarz*, so that a kind of epithet of father and son (the way that was used in *Homer*) is formed to both declare the genealogy of the hero and complete the metrical structure. After the name of *Rostam*, who is the greatest hero of *Shahnameh*, various epithets are mentioned, in this regard, *Ferdowsi's* creativity is much more than *Homer* and *Virgil*, who have mostly repeated the epithets:

ز بهرام و از رستم نامدار

ز هر کت بیرسم به من برشمار. (فردوسی، ج ۲، ص ۳۲۲)

چو سهراب شیر اوژن او را بدید

ز باد جوانی دلش بردمید. (همان، ج ۲، ص ۳۳۶)

چو طوس و چو گودرزکشواد و گیو

چو گرگین و بهرام و فرهاد نیو. (همان، ج ۲، ص ۳۱۳)

که امروز سهراب رزم آزمای

چگونه به جنگ اندر آورد پای. (همان، ج ۲، ص ۳۳۱)

From the rhetorical point of view epithets can convey many different forms of literary figures such as exaggeration, similitude but also the epithet itself in the literal form and structure of speech can increase alliteration and homonymy. Referring to the prominent role of epithet in *Shahnameh*, *Shafi'i* says: "One of the strongest imaginative and visual aspects of *Shahnameh* is a kind of adjustment capability which is obtained from the combination of all the components of speech. Sometimes the poet with use of only epithet without applying imaginative forces in its limited

form like use of similitude and metaphors and different forms of imagery, can achieve such capability. (*Shafi'i* 486). But apart from this direct use of epic formulas in the form of epithets, *Ferdowsi* sometimes uses similitude as a kind of epithet, and the reasons we have numbered about metrical structures are also involved in this type of application:

بزد دست سهراب چون پیل مست

بر آوردش از جای و بنهاد پست. (فردوسی، ج ۲، ص

۳۳۵)

چو رستم ز دست وی آزاد شد

به سان یکی تیغ پولاد شد. (فردوسی، ج ۲، ص

۳۳۶)

فرنگیس گفت ای گو شیر چنگ

چه بودت که دیگر شدستی به رنگ. (فردوسی، ج ۳، ص

۴۴۲)

In the last example, in the phrase *gaw-e shir chang*, there is a kind of indirect similitude, *gaw* is an adjective that has been used instead of *Siyavash*; But in the second attribute, that is, the *shir chang*, which has been added to the first attribute, *Siyavash* is alike the lion, and then claws of the lion is used as his strength point with a kind of synecdoche. Therefore, according to classical Western rhetoric, at least two literary figures of metaphor and metonymy have been used in this type of formulation (*Giunta* 37). In this case, it should be noted that the word *este'āre* is not only equivalent to metaphor, and is sometimes used to refer to the similitude without any comparison words like *ut* in Latin; thereby the relationship between these terms will be as:

Tašbih= metaphor + similitudo

Metaphor = tašbih + este 'āre

In Latin language in some cases the word *imago* is cited as a near equivalent of similitude: *illud genus, quod eikona Graeci vocant, quo exprimitur rerum aut personarum imago (Institutio oratoria, V, 11, 24)*. The use of similitude in the classic works of Western epic is also often considered as an epic formula, as in this case many similes have been repeated and imitated; This includes the metaphor of the lion, which is often seen in the works of Homer and Virgil and is often used to express the status of heroes.

utque leo, specula cum vidit ab alta
stare procul campis meditantem in proelia
taurum,
advolat, haud alia est Turni venientis imago.
(Aen. X, 454-456)

Like a lion standing tall, looking and searching faraway, finds a bull among weald ready for rivalry, and this was nothing but the state of Turnus while rushed forward.

This epic image, as a recurring formula that adds to the visualization and realism of the text, has been taken from Homer's *Iliad* and has been used in various positions in that book and has been repeated in *Aeneid* itself. (*Il. V. 161-4, XVI. 487-91, XVII. 542*) By comparing the above text with the *Iliad*, the extent of change in visualization in repeated formulaic similes in Virgil's speech can be discovered;

ὦς δὲ λέων ἐν βουσί θορῶν ἐξ αὐχένα ἄξι
πόρτιος ἠὲ βοῶς ξύλοχον κάτα
βοσκομενάων,
ὦς τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐξ ἵππων Τυδέος υἱὸς
βῆσε κακῶς ἀέκοντας, ἔπειτα δὲ τεύχε'
ἐσύλα· (*Il. V, vv. 161-164*)

like a lion who attacks a herd, and the shepherd injures him but he would not give up rather adds to his rage and destroys every obstacle entering the barn, and the sheep fearfully and shaky jump up each other's heads running around and he runs among them with deep rage, the son of Tydeus has done such among the Teucres.

As can be seen, formulaic and frequent similes in works such as *Iliad* and *Aeneid* are often complex and detailed, while such similes are briefly expressed due to Ferdowsi's approach to composing epic and the huge volume of his work. even the direct use of the represented objects in similes are inferior compared with classic epics:

به کردار شیری که بر گور نر
زند چنگ و گور اندر آید به سر
نشست از بر سینۀ پیل تن

پراز خاک چنگال و روی و دهن.
(فردوسی، ج ۲، ص ۳۳۵)

Ferdowsi, on the other hand, has used repetition as a kind of epic formula and has sometimes used it inevitably, as the reason for repetition is sometimes the use of rhyme, which sometimes forces the poet to repeat words and themes, Khaleghi Motlagh has given 29 examples of these verses as evidence and among them are verses which end in the names of places and people, such as Siyavakhshgerd, Darabgerd and Yazdgerd (Khaleghi 431).

Explaining the reason for repetition and imitation in *Shahnameh*, Khaleghi has said: "One reason for the repetition is the evolution of epic language's technique in Iranian literature, but this evolution is not limited to epic language only. And studying Persian *qaṣā'id* and *ghazals* or investigating lyrical, mystical and ethical poems also guide us to a technique in repetition which is

specific to each of them. Another reason is the repetition of the metrical structure in Persian poetry, which due to the consideration of the quantity of syllables in each written form, some compounds are inevitably created in the language which among them ones who suite better in terms of words or content become prevalent. Now, the more we limit the number of meters, we have practically reduced the multiplicity of terms and combinations and increased their similarity and repetition. Thus, if non-epic poets have more freedom in choosing the meter, in epic poetry, because such poetry is written only in the *mutaqārib* metre, the use of combinations and terms becomes limited, and as a result, the number of same or similar terms and combinations and expressions will rise" (Khaleghi 429-430).

Repetition is also seen as a kind of epic formula in the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and *Aeneid*, and the most common type is the repetition of terms and interpretations in describing various scenes, especially battle scenes and descriptions of sunrise and sunset, which also are very much alike in Ferdowsi's speech. For example, the description of the sunrise with a phrase, like when the girl of light, the dawn, with its rosy fingers Ἡὼς Ῥοδοδάκτυλος, shines, is repeated twenty times in the *Odyssey*, and it is almost the same in the *Iliad* (Griffin 15); cf. for example *Od.* II, 1; III, 404; IV, 306, V, 228. Epic expressions and terms in *Aeneid* like other works of classical epic have been repeated many times, these kinds of repetitions are more evident in scenes such as parent's mourning after the murder of their child by enemy and the way gods are called upon and when help is requested from gods and describing battle and storm scenes. Virgil, for example, repeats the phrase "blood ripples in the pits" to express the escalation of war and its severity (*inundant sanguine fossae*, *Aen.* X, 24 – XI, 382). The diverging of the ship from the

land and the disappearance of the terrene from the sight of the ship's voyagers and their journey in the endless sea has been repeated in this way (*maria undique et undique caelum*, *Aen.* III, 192-195 or V 8-11), and this repetition itself is the result of Homer's imitation of the book *Odyssey* and his expression about the ship's passage over the vast arena of the azure sea, Virgil's words are in fact a lasting translation of the *Odyssey*:

ἄλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὴν νῆσον ἐλείπομεν, οὐδέ τις ἄλλη
φαίνεται γαίῳ, ἀλλ' οὐρανὸς ἠδὲ θάλασσα
(*Od.* XII, 403-404)

But then we have let apart the island,
And there was no longer land to be seen,
only the sky and the sea.

In this way, *Aeneid* is a continuation of the epic literature of ancient Greece and in fact is a kind of combination between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which is why the poet in this epic work always intends to repeat and imitate the heritage of Greek literature. In this case, the repetition and imitation of Virgil is not a repetition within the text, but it can be considered intertextual, such an approach can be explained by the close connection between the Greek and Roman epics (Di Sacco 165). Such repetitions are also common in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, for example to express the smile and the sunniness emerging from that, Ferdowsi has repeated the phrase *goshāde rokh* and *sim dandān* like:

که باتو چه گفت آن که خندان شدی

گشاده رخ و سیم دندان شدی. (نقل از خالقی، ص ۴۳۹)

همه دختران شاد و خندان شدند

گشاده رخ و سیم دندان شدند. (همان)

چو این بشنود شاه خندان شود

The conclusion

The language of classical epics follows certain rules that are common between various types of Aryan culture, the very similar parallels in the epic techniques used in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* and the three best instances of Western epic, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Aeneid*, best highlights such sharing. Repetition of epic formulas is formed based on oral tradition and the need to facilitate the memorization and narration of poems, and it has become widespread among epic poets, even in written and artifact epics such as *Aeneid*. Of the most dominant examples of epic formulas are epithets and repeated similes, and imitation and repetition of descriptive scenes, which

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will be repeated in different positions due to the necessity of ordering speech.

The Persian epic poetry's metre and Latin and Greek hexameters are very efficient for shaping and using epithets; to the extent that the rules of rhythmi-metrical scansion, of course, according to the descriptions of heroic characteristics, have led the poet to use a certain epithet. On the other hand, in addition to emphasizing through repetition, epithets in the rhetorical aspects of epic works cause more ornamentation and increase the use of descriptive and sometimes metaphorical contexts. In general, it can be said that recognizing epic formulas and examining the frequency of application, method of use and type of composition, through comparative literature can be effective in analysing the epic style of works such as *Shahnameh*.

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