



ḲOSROW-NĀMA

ḲOSROW-NĀMA, a verse romance in the *hazaj* meter traditionally ascribed to [Farid-al-Din 'Aṭṭār](#) (1145/46-1221). It recounts the adventures of two young, royal lovers, Gol and Hermez, the latter of whom is also known as Ḳosrow. Manuscript titles bear various permutations of the protagonists' names, including *Gol o Ḳosrow* and *Gol o Hermez*, but it is most commonly known as the *Ḳosrow-nāma*, which is also the title assigned to the poem within the text itself ('Aṭṭār [attrib.], 1961, p. 29, verse 586). The male protagonist's name is often voweled as Hormoz, but, as Moḥammad Reżā Šafi'i Kadkani has shown, the rhyme mandates that its final vowel be "e" instead of "o." He speculates that this name is linked not to the Iranian Hormozd, but the Greek [Hermes](#) (Šafi'i Kadkani, 1999, p. 101).

The *Ḳosrow-nāma* follows the standard narrative arc of Perso-Hellenic romances, in which the lovers fall in love at first sight, are separated against their will, and must endure a series of trials in far-flung locales before they can reunite. The story takes place in a vaguely pre-Islamic period of Byzantine ascendancy, and Paola Orsatti has shown that key elements of the narrative can be traced back to the mass of legends surrounding the life of Ḳosrow Parviz, albeit in substantially altered forms (pp. 24-27). Hermez is the son of the Roman Caesar and a concubine, but because of a plot against his life, he was secretly spirited out of Byzantium as a newborn. He ends up in Khuzestan (Ḳuzestān), where he is adopted by the local king's gardener, who keeps his royal identity a secret. One day Gol, the king's daughter, is on the roof of the palace and catches sight of Hermez. She falls hopelessly in love, and with her



nurse serving as an intermediary, Hermez is soon smitten as well. The king of Isfahan, however, also desires her, and when his offer of marriage is rebuffed, he comes to take her by force. Thus begins a long series of adventures featuring the familiar romantic tropes of shipwrecks, cross-dressing disguises, and daring escapes before Gol and Ḳosrow manage to marry in Constantinople. The poem is divided into episodic chapters, many of which open with the narrator invoking different species of birds and imploring them to sing the next episode of the tale, reminiscent of the calls to the cupbearer and minstrel in Neẓāmi Ganjavi's *Šaraf-nāma* and *Eqbāl-nāma* (see [ESKANDAR-NĀMA OF NEẒĀMI](#)). The romance displays poetic and narrative similarities with Neẓāmi's other works, especially *Ḳosrow o Širin* (Orsatti, pp. 27-30; Zanjāni).

In the poem's introduction, the poet recounts the circumstances of its production. He claims that he composed it at the urging of friends after a three-year hiatus from versifying, and that he based it on a prose text by a certain Badr-e Ahvāzi ('Aṭṭār [attrib.], 1961, p. 31, verse 617). The identity of this individual is not known, but 'Ali Akbar Dehḳodā (q.v.) speculates it may be the same Ahvāzi denigrated by Nāṣer-e Ḳosrow (1004-1072/77) as a composer of irreligious verse (s.v. "Badr-e Ahvāzi"). In any case, much of the romance's central action takes place in Khuzestan, and Hellmut Ritter suggests it may be a local legend from the area consistent with the *nesba* of the alleged source (Ritter, 1939, pp. 160-61).

Sometime after finishing the poem, the poet made substantial revisions. A friend criticized the *Ḳosrow-nāma* for being too long and including homiletic verses (*tawḥid o na't o pand o amṭāl* 'God's oneness, praise, advice, and aphorism', p. 33, verse 655) that later appeared in the *Asrār-nāma*. At his friend's suggestion, the poet shortened the work and rewrote the doxology and other homiletic verses ('Aṭṭār [attrib.], 1961, pp. 33). Ritter has observed that all versions of the poem described in the handlists seem to derive from this second recension of the text, but more philological work needs to be done (Ritter, 1939, pp. 145-46).

The poem has traditionally been ascribed to 'Aṭṭār; the biographical-anthologists consider it to be his work, the poet refers to himself as "Farid" and "'Aṭṭār" at multiple points, and he references 'Aṭṭār's genuine works as his own in the romance's introduction. Furthermore, the preface to the *Mokṭār-nāma* (q.v.), which is generally accepted as one of 'Aṭṭār's genuine works, contains a list of the poet's compositions that includes the title *Ḳosrow-nāma*

(Mirafzali; 'Aṭṭār, 2010, pp. 70, 72). Scholars such as Ritter, Badi'-al-Zamān Foruzānfar (q.v.), and Sa'id Nafisi thus all considered the *Ḳosrow-nāma* to be genuine. In 1979, however, Šafi'i Kadkani argued that the romance was a spurious attribution, the result of a forged introduction being affixed to a pre-existing romance. He claims that the poem appears late in the manuscript tradition relative to 'Aṭṭār's other works and that it exhibits religious and stylistic characteristics more consistent with a late 14th- or 15th-century provenance (Šafi'i Kadkani, 2010, pp. 44-57). He also perceives several inconsistencies in the introduction's account of the poem's composition (pp. 38-44). As for the *Moktār-nāma*'s reference to the *Ḳosrow-nāma*, Šafi'i Kadkani argues that the *Elāhi-nāma*, one of 'Aṭṭār's undisputed works, was originally known by that title. According to Šafi'i Kadkani, it acquired its current name over time and its original identity as the *Ḳosrow-nāma* was forgotten. This created an opportunity for a forger to craft a spurious introduction for the romance *Gol o Hermez* and attribute it to 'Aṭṭār as the now-missing *Ḳosrow-nāma* (pp. 57-59).

The argument, however, is problematic in a few respects. First, Šafi'i Kadkani's analysis of the manuscript tradition misses the earliest known manuscript of the *Ḳosrow-nāma*, housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France and dated 1297 (O'Malley, pp. 206-9; Blochet, III, pp. 87-88). The manuscript, which includes both the romance and its allegedly forged introduction, precludes a 15th-century provenance for either. Second, the poem's stylistic and religious deviations from 'Aṭṭār's genuine works are much less severe than usually supposed, and the inconsistencies in the introduction can be explained by a multi-staged process of revision, common enough in pre-modern Perso-Arabic manuscript culture (O'Malley, pp. 209-23). Finally, *pace* Šafi'i Kadkani, there is no concrete philological evidence that the *Elāhi-nāma* ever circulated under the title *Ḳosrow-nāma*, so the *Moktār-nāma*'s mention of the latter cannot be easily explained away as a reference to the former (O'Malley, pp. 223-24).

In a later publication, Šafi'i-Kadkani suggested that the romance itself (but not its allegedly forged introduction) may have been written in the early 13th century, and he claimed to have deduced the identity of its author. A panegyric line attributed to "Farid-e 'Aṭṭār" in praise of the Ḳ^vārazmšāh Moḥammad b. Tekeš (r. 1200-1220) is found in Šams-e Qays' *Mo'jam*, but it is absent from 'Aṭṭār's *Divān* (Šams-e Qays, p. 331). On this basis, Šafi'i Kadkani argues that there must have been another poet by the name of Farid-e 'Aṭṭār in Khorasan or Transoxiana who served as a panegyrist for the Ḳ^vārazmšāh. He



speculates that this 'Aṭṭār composed the *Ḳosrow-nāma* and that the forged introduction was then affixed to it during the 14th or 15th century (Šafi'i Kadkani, 1999, pp. 96-101). Akbar Naḥvi accepts Šafi'i Kadkani's conclusion that the poem is spurious but argues that the poem's true provenance is Isfahan. His argument is primarily based on two dialectical words that appear in the poem, a biographical reading of one chapter's opening invocation, and a proposed identification of the poet's spiritual guide (see below).

The *Ḳosrow-nāma* is near unanimously ascribed to 'Aṭṭār by the anthologists and biographers, with one partial exception. Under his entry for *Ḳosrow-nāma*, Kāteb Čelebi (d. 1657; see [KAŠF AL-ḶONUN](#)) gives the poet's name (incorrectly) as Farid-al-Din Moḥammad b. Ebrāhim 'Aṭṭār Hamadāni (Čelebi, I, col. 704; Ritter, 1958, pp. 1-3; Nafisi, pp. 25-27, 80). There is a separate entry for *Gol o Hermez*, however, in which the poet's name is given as Shaikh 'Aṭṭār Abu 'Abd-Allāh Moḥammad Miānji (Čelebi, II, col. 1506). This discrepancy could preserve some memory of another version of the poem by a different 'Aṭṭār, and Naḥvi accepts Miānji as his postulated Isfahani poet (Naḥvi, pp. 90-91). On the other hand, it could be a simple error: Kāteb Čelebi gives 'Aṭṭār the incorrect *nesba* Hamadāni and provides him with conflicting death dates throughout his entries. In any case, this is quite a late source.

Because the *Ḳosrow-nāma* provides some details about 'Aṭṭār's life not found in his other poems, the question of its authenticity is important for a reconstruction of his biography. Most consequentially, it contains praise of a religious leader in terms that suggest he was the poet's spiritual guide ('Aṭṭār [attrib.], 1961, pp. 27-28). This individual, an otherwise unknown Sa'd al-Din b. Rabib, is praised as the "pole of the saints," and his father is said to have been the vizier of Khorasan before relinquishing the position. On the basis of his patronym, Naḥvi (who rejects the attribution to 'Aṭṭār) argues that this individual must have been a son of 'Azod-al-Din Abu Šojā' Moḥammad (d. 1165-66), who, as young man, briefly served as vizier of the 'Abbasid caliph al-Mostazher (r. 1094-1118) before being dismissed by the latter's successor, al-Mostaršed (r. 1118-35). Abu Shojā' was the son of Rabib-al-Dawla Abu Maṣur Ḥosayn (d. 1119-20), who was also a vizier to al-Mostazher, and, later, the Seljuk sultans Moḥammad Tapar (r. 1105-18) and his son Maḥmud (r. 1118-31) in Isfahan (Naḥvi, pp. 79-84). Ebn Rabib would thus be the hypothetical son of Abu Šojā' and grandson of Rabib-al-Dawla, and his patronym would refer to the latter. Neither of these individuals served as viziers in Khorasan, however, which is why Foruzānfar and Sohayli Ḷānsāri had previously rejected this



identification (Foruzānfar, pp. 27-30; Sohayli K̲vānsāri, pp. xxvi–xxviii). Naḥvi, on the other hand, argues that the reference to Khorasan must be another interpolation made by the same forgers who allegedly attributed the work to ‘Aṭṭār (p. 84).

The romance was published as a lithograph in Lucknow, India, by Tamar-e Hend press in 1878. The only modern edition is that of Sohayli K̲vānsāri, first published in 1961, but it does not use the early Bibliothèque nationale manuscript, and it indicates manuscript variants sparingly in a rather haphazard fashion.

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