



## ABŪ 'ALĪ BALKĪ

**ABŪ 'ALĪ MOḤAMMAD B. AḤMAD BALKĪ**, author of a *Šāh-nāma*, according to Bīrūnī (*Āṭār al-bāqīa*, pp. 99f.). Abū 'Alī is said to have selected traditions regarding the beginning of the world from *Sīar al-molūk* by Ebn Moqaffa' and books by Moḥammad b. Jahm Barmakī, Hešām b. Qāsem, Bahrām b. Mardānšāh (mobad of the city of Šāpūr), and Bahrām b. Mehrān Ešfahānī, and to have compared these versions with the book of Bahrām Heravī Mājūsī. Bīrūnī also mentions the *Šāh-nāma* of **Abū Manšūr**, Ferdowsī's principal source (*Āṭār al-bāqīa*, pp. 38, 116); and so Rosen ("Khudāi-Nāme," pp. 190ff.) concluded that Bīrūnī was in both instances referring to the same work. This was accepted by Ṭāq-e Bostānizāda ("Šāh-nāmahā-ye fārsī," pp. 152ff.) and Barthold ("Geschichte," pp. 152ff.). The arguments against this view will be given more fully s.vv. *Kodāy-nāma* and *Šāh-nāma* and rest mainly on the marked discrepancies between Bīrūnī's quotations from Abū 'Alī's *Šāh-nāma*—the only clue we have to the contents of Abū Manšūr's *Šāh-nāma*—and the corresponding passages in the Ferdowsī *Šāh-nāma*.

Barthold suggested that Abū 'Alī Moḥammad b. Aḥmad Balkī was identical with **Moḥammad b. Aḥmad Daqīqī**; but this theory does not explain why Bīrūnī, in writing of Abū 'Alī, does not cite the surname Daqīqī, but does call him Balkī. Daqīqī was almost certainly from Ṭūs (Kāleqī Moṭlaq, "Ṭūs"); his *konya* is given elsewhere as Abū Manšūr; and according to Ferdowsī (*Šāh-nāma* [Moscow] VI, p. 65.11) he had versified only 1,000 *bayts* of the *Šāh-nāma* when he was killed by his servant.

A theory argued by Taqīzāda ("Abu'l-Mo'ayyad Balkī," p. 23) and Bahār (*Sabk-*



šenāsī II, Tehran, 1337 Š./1958, p. 30, is that Abū 'Alī Balkī was identical with *Abu'l-Mo'ayyad Balkī*. In the 4th-5th/10th-11th centuries two prose *Šāh-nāmas* enjoyed special fame. One was the *Šāh-nāma-ye Abū Manšūrī*, the text of which, compiled in Ṭūs, was used in Bokhara by Daqīqī, in Ṭūs by Ferdowsī, in Nīšāpūr by Ṭa'ālebī, and in Gorgān by Bīrūnī. The second, the *Šāh-nāma* of Abu'l-Mo'ayyad Balkī, was used in Bokhara by Baḷ'amī (*Tārīk-e Baḷ'amī*, ed. M. T. Bahār, Tehran, 1353 Š./1974, I, p. 133), in Gorgān by Amīr 'Onsor-al-ma'ālī (*Qābūs-nāma*, ed. Sa'īd Nafīsī, Tehran, 1347 Š./1968, pp. 2, 201), and in K̄vārazm by Ebn Esfandiār (p. 18). Bīrūnī is hardly likely to have ignored the famous *Šāh-nāma* of Abu'l-Mo'ayyad Balkī, and instead to have used a versified *Šāh-nāma* by one Abū 'Alī Balkī whose name only appears in Bīrūnī's own book. It is probable therefore that this Abū 'Alī Balkī is the same as Abu'l-Mo'ayyad Balkī. Although Bīrūnī calls Abū 'Alī Balkī a poet, it does not necessarily imply that his *Šāh-nāma* was versified; Bīrūnī's words and the subjects that he discusses on Abū 'Alī's authority suggest strongly that the book he refers to, like the *Šāh-nāma* of Abu'l-Mo'ayyad Balkī, who was also a poet, was compiled in prose.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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