



ABŪ BAKR QOHESTĀNĪ

ABŪ BAKR QOHESTĀNĪ, 'AMĪD-AL-MOLK 'ALĪ B. ḤASAN, fl. 5th/11th century, a courtier and man of letters under the Ghaznavids and Saljuqs; himself a poet, he patronized poetry generously. He is said to have been originally from Rokkaj. He was still a young man when he gained the attention of Sultan Maḥmūd by explaining a vague, threatening allusion in the caliph's letter which all secretaries had failed to understand. Thereupon he was granted the honor of sitting in the royal presence. Later he became the paymaster (*ārez-e laškar*) of Maḥmūd's army, but the story of his missions to Byzantium, related by Sanā'ī, is probably unfounded. When the prince Moḥammad was appointed governor of Gūzgānān, Abū Bakr accompanied the latter as his adjutant (*kadkodā*, 401/1010-11). Later he became the head of his chancery.

Amīr Moḥammad succeeded his father upon his death in 421/1030, only to be dethroned and put in prison in the same year by the partisans of his brother Mas'ūd, who had marched in triumph from Ray. Abū Bakr, who according to Bākarzī had made unfavorable remarks about Mas'ūd in his poetry, escaped through Kermān to Iraq. A remark by Amīr Moḥammad suggests that the then powerful Abū Sahl Zūzanī, the former adjutant of Mas'ūd in Herat, bore an old grudge against Abū Bakr.

Abū Bakr reached Baghdad in the late 420s/1030th where he panegyricized Caliph al-Qāder be'llāh and some of his court nobles. He left Baghdad and entered the service of the Saljuqs. He prospered under the new masters and in 435/1043-44, according to Bākarzī, was the inspector general (*mošref*) of Khorasan.



Abū Bakr's reputation for learning, generosity and good nature attracted many poets to his circle. Farroķī Sīstānī, who was associated with Moĥammad's court, praised him lavishly in four *qaṣīdas*; perhaps they were briefly associated. Abū Bakr is referred to as a master of Arabic poetry and prose. Bāķarzī, another panegyrist of Abū Bakr, compares his poetry with that of Emro' al-Qays. Fragments of his poetry are preserved in *Tatemmat al-yatīma*, *Domyat al-qaṣr*, *Maġma' al-odabā'*, and *Tārīķ-e ĵahāngoṣā*. They include satire, panegyrics, love poetry, and wisdom. His epistolary writings, apparently now lost, had been collected in a volume. Aphorisms attributed to him are quoted by Ta'ālebī. Specimens of his poetry in Persian, if he wrote any at all, are yet to be found. Two line attributed to him in *Maġma' al-foṣaĥā'* are in fact by Daqīqī. Yāqūt reports that Abū Bakr's interest in the philosophy and science of the ancients made him a subject of hostile remarks. He is also referred to as an easygoing man who liked humor, fun, and young boys.

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