



ABŪ MANŠŪR HERAVĪ

ABŪ MANŠŪR MOWAFFAQ B. 'ALĪ HERAVĪ, ḤAKĪM (fl. ca. 370-80/980-90), author of the oldest preserved Persian text on *materia medica*, *Ketāb al-abnīa 'an ḥaqā'eq al-adwīa*. He is known only from this source, which provides his name and title and attests to his Muslim faith (ed. Bahmanyār [see bibliog.], p. 1). Knowledge of his place and date of activity is necessarily approximate. Of the two preserved manuscripts of his *Ketāb al-abnīa*, the copy made by the poet Asadī Ṭūsī in Šawwāl, 447/December, 1055-January, 1056 is the oldest extant New Persian manuscript, and early attracted scholarly attention (J. von Hammer[-Purgstall] in *Fundgruben des Orients* II, Vienna, 1811, pp. 292-93; republished in 1812 as *Codices Arabicos . . . Bibliothecae . . . Vindobonensis, recensuit . . .*, pp. 10-11, no. 83). This copy provides a clear *terminus ante quem* for the book's composition, but a *terminus post quem* can not be easily established. The dedicatee is referred to only as *ḥazrat-e 'alī mawlānā al-amīr al-mosaddad al-mo'ayyad al-manšūr*. While this titlature indicates a ruler in the Samanid sphere of influence, it could apply to princes as far apart as the Buyids of northern Iran and the early Ghaznavids (C. E. Bosworth, "The Titlature of the Early Ghaznavids," *Oriens* 15, 1962, p. 214; L. Richter-Bernburg, "Amīr—Malik—Shāhānshāh: 'Aḏud ad-Daula's Titlature Reexamined," *Iran* 18, 1980, pp. 83-102). It appears plausible the Abū Manšūr may have spent at least some time in Ghaznavid dominions and even traveled to India; he repeatedly refers to Indian medicine and quotes such authorities as Srīfarkavādat (Śrīhārgavadatta), Rātā (?), Bahāyil (?), and Jātak (i.e., a book on nativities, *jātaka*), in addition to sources previously assimilated into Arabic medicine (Achundow, "Grundsätze," pp. 294-96). On the other hand, he twice



quotes Abū Māher Mūsā b. Yūsuf b. Sayyār—an acquaintance which points to some familiarity with authors in the Buyid realm. Of the authorities named in Abū Manşūr’s book, Abū Māher is closest to the author’s lifetime. The two quotations (ed. Bahmanyār, pp. 117, 318) have close parallels in the works of Abū Māher’s two famous students, ‘Alī b. al-‘Abbās al-Majūsī, who wrote his *Kāmel al-šenā‘at al-ṭebbīya* for ‘Azod-al-dawla between 364 and 367/974-78, and Aḥmad b. Moḥammad al-Ṭabarī, author of *al-Mo‘ālaḡāt al-boqrāṭīya* and physician at the court of the Buyid Rokn-al-dawla (Ebn Abī Oṣaybe‘a, *Oyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭĀjabaqāt al-aṭebbā’*, Cairo, 1882-84, II, p. 321) (See Majūsī, *Kāmel*, Būlāq, 1294/1877, II, p. 116.13-15; and M. Rihab, “Der arabische Arzt At-Tabari. Übersetzung einzelner Abschnitte aus seinen ” Hippokratischen Behandlungen”, *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 19, 1927, p. 160.) Thus the year 360/971 could be taken as a plausible *terminus post quem* for Abū Manşūr’s activity.

In spite of the author’s professed predilection for Indian medicine (ed. Bahmanyār, pp. 3-5), his literary models are clearly Arabic texts which continue the tradition of Galenic medicine. Abū Manşūr discusses the properties and medicinal uses of simples (minerals, plants, and animals) in 584 articles ordered according to the Arabic alphabet (*abtaṭ*). The fact that he lists the simples under their Arabic names even when Persian equivalents exist further shows his dependence on Arabic models; within the text itself, however, he generally uses Persian drug names whenever these are available. He frequently adds synonyms from Greek, Syriac, “Indian,” and also from local Persian dialects. As for medical terminology proper, Abū Manşūr wavers between the Arabic or arabicized terminology of his textbooks and what might be called everyday medical usage with its notable current of native Persian (see G. Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane*, Paris, 1963, pp. 45-48).

The importance of Asadī’s manuscript of *Ketāb al-abnīa* as evidence for the early stage of the New Persian literary language and especially of technical prose has long been recognized (see Qazvīnī and Mīnovī in bibliog.). The book has been repeatedly studied as a document of medical history, but no detailed study has been made to evaluate Abū Manşūr’s sources, whether oral (in Persian) or written (in Arabic). The text was copied as late as ca. 700/1300 (M. T. Dānešpażūh, “al-Abnīa ‘an ḡaqā’eq al-adwīa,” *Rāhnamā-ye ketāb* 9, 1345 Š./1966, pp. 491-93), but it left no trace of influence in later Persian medical literature.



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