



## ABU'L-'ALĀ' ŠOŠTARĪ

**ABU'L-'ALĀ' ŠOŠTARĪ** (referred to also as BU'L-'ALĀ', in both forms either with or without the *nesba*), early Persian poet and prosodist (the earliest known from the Šoštār area). The identity of the poet referred to simply as (A)bu'l-'Alā' with (A)bu'l-'Alā' Šoštārī is indicated by remains of his poetry: A *bayt* attributed to Abu'l-'Alā' in Rādūyānī's *Tarjomān al-balāgha* (ed. A. Ateş, Istanbul, 1949, p. 49) is assigned to Šoštārī by Vaṭvāṭ (*Ḥadā'eq al-sehr*, ed. 'Abbās Eqbāl, Tehran, 1308 Š./1929-30, p. 46); and its meter and rhyme correspond to those of another *bayt* cited by Rādūyānī and ascribed to Bu'l-'Alā' Šoštārī (p. 85).

The earliest mention of Abu'l-'Alā' is in a *qaṣīda* of Manūčehrī (*Dīvān*, ed. M. Dabīrsīāqī, Tehran, 1326 Š./1948, p. 133). The former heads a list of Persian poets of earlier (i.e., pre-Ghaznavid) times whom Manūčehrī evidently regarded as outstanding. Manūčehrī divides these poets into the eloquent (*soḵangūyān*) and the wise (*ḥakīmān*), including Abu'l-'Alā' among the eloquent. All poets of this group whose dates are at least approximately known belong to the late 3rd to early 4th/late 9th to early 10th century. Hence this period may be suggested as probable for the lifetime of Abu'l-'Alā' as well. Moreover the language and style of the few surviving specimens of his poetry also indicate the late Saffarid or early Samanid period (late 3rd to 4th cent.). It may be supposed that he was connected with the Samanid court, as were most of the poets in Manūčehrī's list.

Of Abu'l-'Alā's poetry, only nine and a half *bayts* survive, cited by Rādūyānī and Vaṭvāṭ and in the various recensions of Asadī Ṭūsī's *Loḡat-e fors*. These remains show his skill and expressiveness in wine-poems (*ḵamrīyāt*),



portrayal of nature, and use of proverbs and idioms; he was evidently one of the first to compose enigmas (*mo'ammāt*) and obscene satirical verse. According to Rādūyānī (p. 2), he was one of the two earliest men who “did prosody (*'arūž*) in Persian,” apparently meaning that he composed works on it for practical use.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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