



ASĪR EŞFAHĀNĪ

ASĪR EŞFAHĀNĪ (or ŠAHRESTĀNĪ), MĪRZĀ JALĀL B. MĪRZĀ MO'MEN, a poet of the 11th/17th century (d. 1049/1639). He was a leading *sayyed* of Šahrestān (a quarter of Isfahan) and was married to one of the shah's daughters, Malek-al-nesā' Bīgom. He enjoyed the high esteem of the shah as well as the respect of the poets and literary men of his time. He appears to have been well versed in current branches of learning.

Several anthologists and biographers ascribed to Asīr the invention of the so-called Indian (more appropriately Eşfahānī) style of poetry-writing (see Šā'eb, *Dīvān*, ed. Amīrī Firūzkūhī, Tehran, 1345 Š./1966 editor's preface). The notion appears to have arisen because Sā'eb Tabrīzī, the greatest master of the "Indian" style, paid a compliment to Asīr by declaring himself to be an imitator of Asīr's poetry.

Despite Asīr's role as an innovative poet, and as a grandee and son-in-law of Shah 'Abbās, scarcely anything about his life is known. The *taḏkera*-writers have very little to say about him. Āḏar Bīgdelī (*Ātaškada*, ed. M. J. Šahīdī, Tehran, 1337 Š./1958, p. 199) has only one short sentence without a word of biographical information. Moḥammad-Ṭāher Naşrābādī (*Tadkera*, ed. Waḥīd Dastgerdī, Tehran, 1317 Š./1938, pp. 95-96), a contemporary and, to judge by some of his remarks, a frequent guest of Asīr, says only that Asīr was kindhearted, affable, and fond of the company of poets, but died young from overindulgence in wine (cf. H. Ethé, in Geiger and Kuhn, *Grundr. Ir. Phil.* II, pp. 311-14; Pers. tr. R. Šafaq, *Tārīḳ-e adabiyāt-e fārsī*, Tehran, 1337 Š./1958, p. 199). He mentions Asīr's *dīvān* of *qaşīdas*, *ġazals*, and *maṭnawīs* amounting to



almost 20,000 verses of varying quality.

According to Moḥammad-‘Alī Tarbīat (“Yak şafḥa-ye moḳtaşar az resāla-ye qarn-e ḥādī-‘aşar,” *Armaġān* 13, 1311 Ş./1933, pp. 322-23), Mīrzā Jalāl was imprisoned by Shah Şafī, along with some of the royal kinsfolk in 1042/1633, and thus he adopted the penname Asīr (Prisoner). No evidence has been produced for this. Moreover, no change of pen-name has been found in any of his writings. His pen-name was certainly Asīr throughout his career, and his purported imprisonment is probably a myth based on the meaning of the word *asīr*.

Part of Asīr’s *dīvān*, consisting of *qaşīdas*, *qeṭ‘as*, *maṭnawīs*, *ġazals*, and miscellaneous poems, and running to some 500 pages, was printed at Lucknow in 1297/1880 and reprinted at Kanpur in 1314/1897. He was a student of Faşīḥī Heravī and among his stylistic followers are mentioned Moḥammad Moqīm Khan Masīḥ, Mīrzā Loṭfallāh Neṭār, and ‘Abd-al-Laṭīf Khan Tanhā, 1378/1959.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also Āzād Belgrāmī, *Sarv-e āzād*, Hyderabad, Deccan, 1331/1913, p. 53.

Ḳayyāmpūr, *Sokanvarān*, p. 41.

Goļčīn-e Ma‘ānī, *Taḍkerahā*, pp. 655-56.

Bendarāban Dās Ḳvoşġū, *Safīnā-ye Ḳvoşġū*, Patna, 1378/1959, pp. 214, 249.

Şafā, *Adabīyāt* V/1, Tehran, 1362 Ş./1983, p. 533.