



AṬĪR AḶSĪKATĪ

AṬĪR AḶSĪKATĪ, a poet of the 6th/12th century with a distinctive style. According to late sources such as *Majma' al-foṣaḥā'* (I, p. 269), Aṭīr-al-dīn was his personal name. His *nesba* indicates that he came from Aḳsīkat, then the chief town of Farḡāna in Central Asia. He began his poetic career in the east, but on account of the troubles in Khorasan following the collapse of Sanjar's régime and the sultan's death in 552/1157, he moved to the west and entered the service of Mo'ezz-al-dīn Arslān b. Ṭoḡrel; he has left an ode congratulating Arslān on his accession to the Saljuq sultanate of 'Erāq in 556/1161. Thereafter Aṭīr resided in 'Erāq-e 'Ajamī, Jebāl, and Azarbaijan, and won some fame in that region. In addition to the Saljuq sultan of 'Erāq, Arslān (556/1161-571/1176), the *atābaks* of Azarbaijan, Šams-al-dīn Ildegiz (531/1137-571/1175), Moḥammad Jahān-pahlavān (571/1175-581/1186), and Qezel Arslān 'Oṭmān (581/1186-587/1191) were recipients of his eulogies. He found particular favor with Ildegiz and Qezel Arslān, and is said to have replaced Mojīr-al-dīn Baylaqānī as Qezel Arslān's court poet ('Awfī, *Lobāb* II, p. 223). Aṭīr was in touch with a number of leading local poets such as Kāqānī, Mojīr-al-dīn Baylaqānī, and Asharī Nīšāpūrī. His claim to parity of talent with Kāqānī led to exchanges of abuse and sarcasm between the two. It has even been stated (Dawlatšāh, ed. Browne, p. 80) that Aṭīr traveled from Khorasan to Šervān for the purpose of challenging Kāqānī. Nor did Aṭīr hesitate to decry Mojīr-al-dīn for "plundering loot from the caravan of his poetry." This remark by Aṭīr is reprehended by the historian Rāvandī (*Rāḥat al-šodūr*, p. 327).

The date of Aṭīr's death is given as 577/1181 by Moḥammad Šādeq b. Šāleḥ, the



compiler of the *Šāhed-e šādeq*, as 579/1183 (*Yādgār* 2/6, 1324 Š./1946, p. 29) by Āḍar Biḡdelī (*Āteškada*, p. 318), and as 563/1167 by Hedāyat (*Majma' al-foṣaḥā*, loc. cit.); either 577/1181 or 579/1183 is likely to be correct, because Aṭīr wrote odes in praise of the *atābak* Moḥammad Jahān-pahlavān whose reign began in 571/1175.

The old literary critics placed Aṭīr in the top rank of *qasīda*-writers. His skills in producing rhymes with a *radīf* (appended refrain word or words) or other clever but unnecessary artifices, in handling difficult ideas, and in overcoming various snags which face poets, immediately strike the eye. He certainly did not attain parity with Kāqānī, whom he abused unjustifiably; but he was sometimes able to conceive lofty thoughts, make novel combinations of ideas, and use his wide learning in the creation of new themes, and in these respects he sometimes fell not far short of the great poet of Šervān. Although his work, like that of many contemporary poets, is predominantly erudite, there are some pleasing verses in his *dīvān*, particularly in his graceful *ḡazals*. 'Awfī (*Lobāb* II, p. 224) wrote that Aṭīr's poetry "is embellished and pleasant, and has a wealth of ideas." His *dīvān*, with a biographical introduction, has been published (ed. R. Homāyūn Farroḡ, Tehran, 1337 Š./1958).

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