



## BOSHĀQ AṬ'EMA

**BOSHĀQ** (Abū Eshāq) **AṬ'EMA**, **FAḶR-AL-DĪN ḤALLĀJ ŠĪRĀZĪ** (some sources have Jamāl-al-Din: Nafīsī, *Nazm o naṭr*, pp. 296-97; Şafā, *Adabīyāt* IV, p. 244), satirical poet who used Persian culinary vocabulary and imagery and kitchen terminology to create a novel style of poetry. Although in formal matters he followed classical models, he departed from their hackneyed and didactic Sufi and moral themes and focused instead on satirizing them, though his tone was never bitter or even very serious. Instead, he seems to have reveled in his discovery of a totally untapped source of poetic language, which appealed to his taste for humor and inspired his imagination with fresh and amusing ideas. His known works are collected in a *dīvān*.

Boshāq was born in Shiraz, probably in the early second half of the 8th/14th century, and died there (his tomb still exists) in 827/1423 or 830/1427. His title *ḥallāj*, as well as a story mentioned by Dawlatšāh (p. 367), suggests that he was a cotton carder by profession. As a poet he enjoyed sufficient respect to become a boon companion (*nadīm*) at the court of the Timurid prince Eskandar Mīrzā (d. 817/1415; Dawlatšāh, p. 367). Presumably he traveled to Isfahan and Khorasan and stayed some years in both places (see his *Dīvān*, ed. Shiraz, p. 87). His fascination for Ḥāfeẓ (d. 792/1390) and the fact that he spent the first 25 to 30 years of his life in Shiraz render it likely that he personally knew him. There is nothing in his *Dīvān* to suggest that he had any affiliation with Sufis. Kermānī's report (p. 88), repeated in *Majma' al-foṣaḥā'* (IV, p. 15), of Boshāq's parody of a *ḡazal* by Shah Ne'mat-Allāh Walī and a witticism connected with it, tend rather to indicate disregard for mystical pretensions.



The *dīvān* consists of several distinct parts: 1. *Kanz al-ešteḥā'* (Treasure of appetite), a sort of introduction, consisting of a preamble (*koṭba*) in prose followed by more than 100 distichs of poetry divided into 10 chapters; 2. the longest section of the *dīvān*, consisting of about 110 *gāzals*, most of them seven lines long, of which about ninety are imitations of works by such classical masters as Ḥāfeẓ, Sa'dī, and Salmān Sāvājī (25, 14, and 15 *gāzals* respectively); 3. *Dāstān-e Moza'far o Boḡrā* (The story of Pilaf and Pastry), about 230 distichs in imitation of the *Šāh-nāma*; 4. *Mājarā-ye Berenj o Boḡrā* (The adventure of Rice and Pastry), another fantastic story with a plot turning on the natural properties of edibles, written in a mixture of prose and verse, the second longest section of the *dīvān*; 5. *Asrār-e Čangāl* (The secrets of Čangāl [lit. a kind of sweet]), a short *maṭnawī*. 6. a *tarjī'-band* of nine short stanzas; 7. *Farhang-e dīvān-e aṭ'ema*, humorous but usually correct definitions of many food items, imitating 'Obayd Zākānī's satirical *Dah bāb*; 8. a few *qaṣīdas*, *qeṭ'as*, *robā'īs*, single *bayts*, a prose account of a dream about food (*k'vāb-nāma*), and a *qaṣīda* in 22 *bayts* using Lorī and Kurdish words.

Boshāq's dependence upon classical masters is demonstrated on almost every page of his *dīvān*. Zākānī's innovative satirical style was certainly the most influential factor in shaping the poetry of Boshāq and determining his direction, though he abstained from emulating Zākānī's use of obscene language and imagery. The sharp sarcasm and bitter social criticism of the older master are also lacking in his work. Boshāq's originality lies in his unprecedented use of culinary vocabulary, by which he seems to have intended to express his boredom with the narrow range of themes and the repetitiousness of poetry in his time. The main value of his work is philological; it is indispensable to any study of medieval Iranian food culture.

Boshāq's example was followed by his younger contemporary Aḥmad Aṭ'ema (d. 850/1446) and by Neẓām-al-Dīn Maḥmūd Qārī Yazdī, another 9th/15th-century poet, who made use of clothing vocabulary. The most recent follower of Boshāq was the 14th/20th-century poet Taqī Dāneš, who used the pen name Ḥakīm Sūrī.

