



ČELEBĪ, FATH-ALLĀH 'ĀREF

ČELEBĪ (Čalabī), FATH-ALLĀH 'ĀREF or 'Ārefī, 10th/16th-century poet and author of a *Šāh-nāma* (*Solaymān-nāma*) extolling the Ottoman rulers. All contemporary sources agree that he was of Persian origin, but none furnish reliable information on his exact place of origin or that of his father. Some sources ascribe either to 'Āref or to his father an origin in Shiraz or Qazvīn, but this is probably as a result of confusion with the father of Moḥyī Golšanī (q.v.), who was also called Fath-Allāh and had connections with both cities.

Both 'Āšeḡ Čelebī (fol. 165a) and 'Ālī (fo1. 403a) state that Čelebī 'Āref was or became the *nešānjī* (official entrusted with inscribing the sultan's monogram on documents) of Alqāš Mīrzā, and it has therefore been suggested that Čelebī 'Āref came to Istanbul with him (Sohrweide, p. 269; C. Fleischer, "Alqāš Mīrzā," in *EIr.* I, p. 908). However, Moḥyī Golšanī (p. 413) states that he saw Čelebī 'Āref in Istanbul in 953/1546-47, and Čelebī 'Āref's name appears in a register of those drawing salaries that is dated 24 Ša'bān 952/31 October 1545 (İstanbul Başbakanlık Arşivi, Maliyeden müdevver defter, no. 1788). It is therefore impossible for him to have come to Istanbul with Alqāš Mīrzā. Statements to the effect that Čelebī 'Āref was the *nešānjī* of Alqāš Mīrzā must refer to an appointment that took place after 'Āref's arrival in Istanbul.

Čelebī 'Āref's mother is said to have been Arab. His father, a Persian by the name of Darviš Čelebī, was a disciple of Ebrāhīm Golšanī, whom he apparently accompanied to Cairo after the conquest of Tabrīz by Shah Esmā'īl I, and while in Cairo married the daughter of his shaikh (Moḥyī Golšanī, pp. 245-47). When Sultan Salīm conquered Cairo in 923/1517 he collected the artisans and



scholars of the city and took them with him to Istanbul, as he had earlier done in Tabrīz; it is probable that Čelebī 'Āref's father was among those thus transported, taking his son with him.

Father and son were both attached to the palace, but although Čelebī 'Āref was employed as a *Šāh-nāmagū* (*şehnameci*; composer of a *Šāh-nāma*) it is not known what work his father engaged in. However, when Sultan Solaymān sent gifts to Alqāš Mīrzā in return for the portion of the plunder from 'Erāq-e 'Ajam that he had received from him, it was with the father of Čelebī 'Āref that he sent them (*Solaymān-nāma*, fol. 504b).

Čelebī 'Āref initially received 25 *aqčas* a day for composing his *Šāh-nāma*, but this stipend was increased to 70 when the work was half finished (i.e., when he had written 30,000 *bayts*). It was intended that his *Šāh-nāma* should be a masterpiece not only from the point of view of content, but also—like many manuscripts of the *Šāh-nāma* of Ferdowsī—from the point of view of calligraphy and miniature-painting. A separate structure was therefore added to Čelebī 'Āref's house to serve as a studio for calligraphers and miniature painters, of whom five were employed ('Ālī, fol. 403a; 'Āšeḡ Čelebī, fol. 165b).

When the work was completed in five volumes, it was presented to the ruler. It was thought until recently that no copy had survived of this *Šāh-nāma*, and it was not even known that a volume in the Topkapı Sarayı Library formed part of it (Karatay, p. 61). Not until other copies were discovered did it become apparent that the volume in question was part of the *Šāh-nāma* and that each of its five volumes was devoted to a separate topic. It now appears that only three of the five volumes have survived, the missing volumes being the second (with the exception of a single folio) and the third. The first volume deals with creation and the early prophets; the second with the appearance and rise of Islam; the third with ancient Turkish rulers and the Saljuqs; the fourth with the foundation of the Ottoman empire; and the fifth, entitled *Solaymān-nāma*, entirely with Sultan Solaymān. The first volume was sold by Christie's in London in 1976, and an album containing the sole surviving folio of the second volume is to be found at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M. 73.5.446). The fourth volume is in the Topkapı Sarayı Library in Istanbul (H. 1517).

Apart from this major work, Čelebī 'Āref also wrote the *Salīm-nāma* (or, as it is called on the title page, *Waqāye'-e Solṭān Bāyazīd ma'a Salīm Kān*), an account of the battle between two sons of Sultan Solaymān, Salīm II and Bāyazīd that took place on the plain of Konya on 20 Ša'bān 966/28 May 1559 (for copies see



Karatay, p. 59; Levend, p. 31; and Muzaffer Ozak collection in the library of Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi, Ankara, no. 31). A work entitled *Fotūḥāt-e jamīla* does not bear any name, but, given its meter, style, and the similarities it presents to some parts of the *Solaymān-nāma*, it may be attributed to Čelebī ‘Āref. In addition, the calligraphy of this work and the miniatures that illustrate it resemble the calligraphy and the miniatures of the fourth volume of the *Šāh-nāma*, both books having been copied by the same calligrapher, Mīrzā Kūbī Šīrāzī.

The *Salīm-nāma* was probably Čelebī ‘Āref’s last work, because in the same year that he finished it he went to Cairo to visit his relatives (Moḥyī Golšanī, p. 415). He died there three years later, in 969/1561-62, and was buried in the cemetery attached to the Golšanī hospice (Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, III, p. 116).

‘Āref was generously rewarded for his work, as a result of which he aroused the jealousy of various people, notably the miniaturist who had worked on the book and now vainly tried to denigrate his poetical abilities. Among ‘Āref’s defenders was the anthologist ‘Āšeḡ Čelebī (fol. 165b), who remarked that if even half the sixty thousand *bayts* of the work were bad, the remainder was good enough to establish ‘Āref’s talent. ‘Āšeḡ Čelebī recalls that ‘Āref once read to him 2,000 lines of his *Šāh-nāma* and claimed that they did not contain a single foreign word. The anthologist retorted that *rayḥān* (sweet basil) was Arabic, and that ‘Āref could have used in place of it the Persian word *separḡam*.

According to ‘Āšeḡ Čelebī (fol. 166a), ‘Āref wrote a matchless *naẓīra* (parallel) to a poem by Kāqānī, whereas according to ‘Ālī (fol. 403b), he wrote a *naẓīra* to a poem by Imam Rāzī(?). ‘Āref is also credited with a *dīvān* in Persian and two versified works dealing with the anatomy of men and horses, entitled *Šanam al-kīāl* and *Faras al-kīāl* respectively (Bursalı Tahir, III, p. 116). Mention has also been made of a *Resāla-ye mo‘ammā* (Treatise on riddles), but neither this nor any of the preceding works—with the exception of parts of the *Šāh-nāma*—has survived (Mehmed Tahir, p. 117).

‘Āref wrote poetry in Turkish as easily as he did in Persian. When asked by the Ottoman commander Kādem Solaymān Pasha whether he was able to compose in Turkish, he soon after presented the commander with a 2,000 *bayt* work describing his military expedition to India (*ĪA* XI, pp. 194-96). No trace of this work survives.



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