



DAQĪQĪ, ABŪ MANŞŪR AĤMAD

DAQĪQĪ, ABŪ MANŞŪR AĤMAD b. Aĥmad, one of the famous poets of the last years of the Samanid (204-395/819-1005) dynasty. The exact dates of his birth and death are not known, but, because he began to compose the *Šāh-nāma* at the command of Nūḥ b. Manşūr (r. 365-87/975-97) and [Abu'l-Qāsem Ferdowsī](#) took up the work in about 365/977, Daqīqī's death must have taken place in approximately 366/976; furthermore, as Ferdowsī reported (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, I, p. 13, vv. 128-34) that Daqīqī had been killed at a young age, the date of his birth can probably be placed after 320/932. Various biographers have named Bukhara, Samarqand, Balk, Marv, and Ṭūs as his birthplace; according to Moḥammad 'Awfī (*Lobāb*, ed. Nafīsī, p. 250), it was at Ṭūs, and for several reasons his report seems more probable (Ḳāleqī-Moṭlaq, 1355 Š./1976, pp. 117-28). Certain allusions in Daqīqī's poetry have led scholars to consider him a Zoroastrian (Lazard, *Premiers poètes* I, pp. 141ff. vv. 21, 24, 131, 160, 185, 205, 206, 316-18; see below), but, in addition to his Islamic name and patronymic, there are a few other indications that he was a Muslim (Lazard, *Premiers poètes* I, vv. 6, 17, 57, 86, 91-94, 109, 113, 125-26, 141, 158, 165, 170, 268-69, 346). If his birthplace was in fact Ṭūs, which had long been a Shi'ite city and in the time of the Samanid governor [Abū Manşūr 'Abd-al-Razzāq](#) had become the center of Persian nationalist activity as well, it is probable that Daqīqī, like Ferdowsī, was of the Shi'ite persuasion. In that period many adherents of Shi'ism took pride in the ancient culture of Iran, which led opponents to describe them as Qarmaṭīs and Šo'ūbīs and to rank them among the Mājūs (Zoroastrians) and Zandīqs (Manicheans).



After Abū ‘Abd-Allāh Ja‘far Rūdakī Daqīqī ranked, together with Abū Šakūr Balḵī and Šahīd Balḵī, among the most important poets of the mid-10th century. He wrote panegyrics to such figures as the amir Faḵr-al-Dawla Aḥmad b. Moḥammad of Čaġānīān, north of Termed, and the Samanids Manšūr b. Nūḥ (350-65/961-75) and his successor, Nūḥ b. Manšūr, but what has remained of his *divān* consists of only about 350 scattered verses, including odes, lyrics, rhymed couplets (*maṭnawī*), and other fragments. They include panegyrics; poems on nature, love, and wine; and *andarz*, most known from scattered linguistic examples in dictionaries, especially Asadī’s *Loġat-e fors*.

Daqīqī’s fame is, however, largely owing to the thousand verses preserved in Ferdowsī’s *Šāh-nāma* (Moscow, II, pp. 65-135). They begin with the rule of Goštāsp. According to this version, Zoroaster appeared in the time of Goštāsp, whom he attracted, along with his brother Zarēr and his father, Lohrāsp, to his religion. On that occasion Goštāsp built the fire temple Mehr Borzēn and planted in front of it a cypress sapling that Zoroaster had brought from heaven (see *cypress*). Later, after the cypress had matured, he also built a palace beside it. The remainder of Daqīqī’s verses contain a description of the religious war between Goštāsp and Arjāsp, in which many of Goštāsp’s sons and the heroes of Iran, including the commander-in-chief, Zarēr, and Gerāmī, son of the vizier Jāmāsp, were killed. Finally, however, after Bastūr, Zarēr’s son, took blood revenge on Bīderafš, his father’s killer, the Iranian army, led by Esfandīār, son of Goštāsp, was victorious. Some time after the victory Goštāsp was persuaded by Gorazm to imprison Esfandīār, on the pretext that he intended to kill his father and seize the throne. Meanwhile, Arjāsp, informed of the confusion in Iran, once again attacked Goštāsp. At that point Daqīqī’s description ends, and Ferdowsī’s continuation begins.

The subject of Daqīqī’s thousand lines is the same as that of the Pahlavi treatise *Ayādgār ī Zarērān*, but, as Bernhard Geiger pointed out, Daqīqī’s description was not taken directly from the Pahlavi story; rather, he drew it from the Persian translation of the *Xwadāy-nāmag*, which differs in important respects. That Ferdowsī incorporated Daqīqī’s thousand verses into his book and continued it, apparently without any problem, can be taken as an indication that both had also used the *Šāh-nāma* composed for Abū Manšūr as their source. Daqīqī chose to begin his versification of the text, not from the beginning, but from the accession of Goštāsp, which is generally considered proof that he was a Zoroastrian. But this choice can be viewed differently. Before Ferdowsī the major heroes of the Iranian national epics were Goštāsp



and Esfandiār, not Rostam. As Garšāsp did not play a role in the *Xwadāy-nāmag* and the *Šāh-nāma* of Abū Manšūr, Daqīqī began with the reign of Goštāsp, which is also the beginning of the account of Esfandiār.

In his thousand verses Daqīqī's style shows more archaic features than the style of Ferdowsī, but it is dry and devoid of the similes and images that are to be found in Ferdowsī's poetry. For this reason Ferdowsī, at the conclusion of Daqīqī's words, though he spoke of him with respect, recognizing him as his own forerunner, also criticized his poetry, which he did not consider suitable for the national epic of Iran (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, VI, pp. 136-37 vv. 1-19).

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