



EBN YAMĪN, AMĪR FAḶR-AL-DĪN MAḶMŪD

EBN YAMĪN, AMĪR FAḶR-AL-DĪN MAḶMŪD b. Amir Yamīn-al-Dīn Ṭoġrā'ī, a poet of the 8th/14th century. He was born in 685/1286-87 (Rypka, p. 261; Bāstānī Rād, p. *yd*) in Faryūmad, a center of culture in western Khorasan, into a family of landed gentry; he died on 8 Jomādā II 769/30 January 1368 (ʿAbd-al-Razzāq Ḷvāfī, II, p. 101).

According to his own prose preface to his *Dīvān* (Bāstānī Rād, pp. 1-6), Ebn Yamīn's original book of poems was lost in the battle which occurred in the principality of Ḷvāf between Malek Mo'ezz-al-Dīn ḶḶsayn the Kart (see [ĀL-e KART](#)) and Wajīh-al-Dīn Mas'ūd, the second Sarbedār leader, in 743/1342 (*Dīvān*, pp. 3-4.). All extant manuscripts are, therefore, based on a second compilation (*ibid.*, p. 5). Almost all of Ebn Yamīn's biographers and hagiographers, from Dawlatšāh to Bāstānī Rād, have drawn on the brief prose preface to his *Dīvān* and on his poems, wherein an exceptionally large number of references to the poet's own life and circumstances can be found, in order to sketch his biography and extol his virtues. They all portray Ebn Yamīn as a man of moral virtues and a master composer of *qet'a* (fragment), a poetic genre resembling the *ġazal* pattern. Begun in a provincial setting, Ebn Yamīn's life was an eventful one and culminated in close involvement in the power struggles of Khorasan in the 14th century and in long residence at several courts, most prominently at that of Malek ḶḶsayn the Kart in Herat as *mostawfī* (state comptroller). Eventually, in old age it led to a longed-for return



to Faryūmad, the poet's birth place, and a peaceful death there (Browne, pp. 215-16; Bāstānī Rād, pp. *km, nd, yd, yt*; Şafā, pp. 952-55; Zarrīnkūb, pp. 229-34; *Habīb al-sīar* III, p. 386).

Ebn Yamīn had an eclectic style and a variety of thematic influences. His poetry epitomizes the major characteristics of the late Ḳorāsānī school of Persian poetry, both in generic divisions and stylistic features. His *Dīvān* includes almost all the major genres made current by that school, as well as many of the minor ones like *čīstān* (puzzle-poem), the epigram, the chronogram, and various occasional and commemorative poems. About 100 short *molamma'* (bilingual poems in Arabic and Persian) fragments as well as poems in Arabic accompanied by their verse translation in Persian are also recorded in his *Dīvān*. Following medieval *taḍkera* writers, several contemporary literary historians and critics have mentioned Ebn Yamīn's mastery in the composition of *qet'a* (Browne, p. 216; Rypka, p. 261; Şafā, p. 906), a poem of a philosophical, ethical, or meditative character and an arena where "the poet often tells of his own personal experiences" (Rypka, pp. 95 f.). Browne (pp. 218-22) cites eight of these together with his own verse translation of them. This genre, having risen in importance in the later period of the Ḳorāsānī school, occupies over half of Ebn Yamīn's *Dīvān*, a greater share than any previous poet. But here, as elsewhere in the *Dīvān*, the quality of the poetic utterance varies greatly, inhibiting categorical judgment.

Stylistically, Ebn Yamīn's poetry reflects the main features of the Ḳorāsānī school characterized in the main by relatively simple expressive devices, a pronounced rhythm, and a straightforward syntax (Maḥjūb, pp. 1-15). At the same time, diverse syntactic complexities and preponderance of a lexicon of Arabic derivation already herald the presence of certain stylistic features from the so-called Erāqī school of Persian poetry. In addition to the stock themes and motifs employed in the panegyric *qaṣīda* and love lyrics, Ebn Yamīn's verse compositions aim at propagating human endeavor and industry, warning against excesses of all kinds, and providing observations on the passage of time and the onslaught of old age, death, and the afterlife. Citing a single poem on the pain of existence, Browne calls it characteristic of Ebn Yamīn's "Manichšan and Malthusian pessimism" (p. 218).

A selection of Ebn Yamīn's poems has been translated into German by Maria von Ottakar, with a "Foreword," containing the poet's biographical sketch (*Ibn Jamin's Bruchstücke aus dem Persischen*, Vienna, 1852). E. H. Rodwell has also translated 100 of his *qet'as* into English from a lithograph edition printed in



1865 in Calcutta (*Ibn Yamin. Short Poems*, London, 1922).

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