



FARĀHĪ, ABŪ NAŞR BADR-AL-DĪN MAS'ŪD

FARĀHĪ, ABŪ NAŞR BADR-al-DĪN MAS'ŪD (or Moḥammad/Maḥmūd) b. Abī Bakr b. Ḥosayn b. Ja'far Farāhī, poet and litterateur (fl. 7th/13th cent.). He hailed from the city of Farāh (q.v.) in the province of Sīstān in what is now Afghanistan.

Next to nothing is known of Farāhī's life. Reportedly blind from birth, he is said to have been a man of great sagacity, intellectual dexterity, powers of intuition, and retentive ability. According to *Kašf al-zonūn* (ed. Yalatkaya and Bilge, II, p. 1954) he died in 640/1242. Ebn Ḥosām, in his *Riāz al-fetyān* (a commentary on *Neşāb al-şebyān*) mentions the village Raj near Farāh as the cite of Farāhī's tomb (apud *Neşāb al-şebyān*, ed. M.-J. Maškūr, Tehran, 1354 Š./1975, editor's introduction, p. 1; see also *Kašf al-zonūn*, ed. Yalatkaya and Bilge, II, p. 601).

Farāhī is best-known for his *Neşāb al-şebyān*, a versified Arabic-Persian vocabulary in 200 distiches made of 40 fragments in a variety of meters. The poem, an aide-mémoire composed mainly of Arabic terms with their Persian translations, was intended to facilitate the study of Arabic language and fundamentals of prosody by school children; it also served to acquaint them with some elementary general knowledge. According to the author, the poem is called *Neşāb al-şebyān* because it is made of 200 verses. Commentators on the poem have explained that the poem was so entitled because the minimum



amount of wealth (*neşāb*) liable for payment of the *zakāt* tax is 200 dirhams, which corresponds to the number of verses in the poem. They further add that the children (*al-şebyān*) who have learned this poem by heart are supposed to have accumulated enough knowledge to be liable for paying alms (*zakāt*), which in this case is teaching others what they have already learned themselves.

The manual enjoyed great popularity up to some forty years ago when students of Arabic used to memorize it in its entirety. Its popularity is reflected in the number of commentaries as well as imitations that were made, among them *Zohrat al-adab* (comp 640/1242-43) by Šokr-Allāh b. Šams-al-Dīn Aḥmad and *Riāz al-fetyān* by Ebn Ḥosām (fl. 14th cent.).

Farāhī is also the author of *Lama'at al-badr*, a versified commentary on the *Jāme' al-şaġīrfi'l-forū'* of Moḥammad b. Ḥasan Šaybānī Ḥanīfī, which he completed on 17 Jamādā II 617/17 August 1220. A gloss by 'Alā'-al-Dīn 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Kojandī, entitled *Żow' al-lom'a*, was later composed on Farāhī's poem. The poem attributed to Farāhī in some sources (e.g., *Ḥabīb al-sīār* II, p. 628, *Mirkvānd*, IV, p. 658, *Malekšāh Ḥosayn*, p. 75), as pointed out by Moḥammad Qazvīnī (*Lobāb*, comm., pp. 352-53), is in fact by Emām Šaraf-al-Dīn Farāhī, a contemporary of Abū Naşr.

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'A.-N. Monzawī, *Farhanghā-ye 'arabī be fārsī*, Tehran, 1337 Š./1958, pp. 84-121.



M. Nakjavānī, “Neşāb al-şebyān,” *Yağmā* 10, pp. 218-20.

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N. Pākdāman, “Neşāb al-şebyān,” *Alefbā* 6, 1356, pp. 320-42.

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