



FĀRYĀBĪ, ṢAHĪR-AL-DĪN ABU'L-FAẒL ṢĀHER

FĀRYĀBĪ, ṢAHĪR-AL-DĪN ABU'L-FAẒL ṢĀHER, b. Moḥammad, Persian poet who used Ṣahīr as his pen name. He was born at Fāryāb, modern Dawlatābād, in the province of Jūzjān near Balk (q.v.), probably about 550/1156, or in 1160 according to Kuliyeu (Rypka, *Hist. Iran. Lit.*, p. 209; Kuliyeu, pp. 145-46); the occurrence of Turkish words in his poetry gave rise to the incorrect assumption that he was of Turkish origin (Rypka, *Camb. Hist. Iran*, p. 577). Ṣahīr-al-Dīn died in Rabī' I 598/November-December 1201 at Tabrīz and was buried in the graveyard of poets at Sorḳāb (*Tārīḳ-e gozīda*, ed. Browne, pp. 737-38). From his works it appears that he was a *poeta doctus* with a good education in Arabic and sciences, especially astronomy. For several years he wandered from court to court writing eulogies for many different patrons. As a young poet he enjoyed the protection of 'Azod-al-Dīn Toḡānšāh b. Mo'ayyad (d. 582/1186), the local ruler of Nīšāpūr. In 582/1186 he wrote an astrological treatise refuting the prognostication of a hurricane, which, according to legend, was made by Anwarī (q.v.). In the same year Ṣahīr went to Isfahan, where he found a new patronage with the Āl-e Ḳojand, a family of Hanafite scholars who as *šadrsexercised* political control over that city. In 585/1189 he traveled further to the court of the Bavandid Espahbad Ḥosām-al-Dawla Ardašīr in Māzandarān; eventually he settled down at the court of the Ildegozid *atābegs* in Azarbaijan. His most important patrons were Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Qezel Arslān (581-87/1186-91) and Noṣrat-al-Dīn Abū Bakr (591-607/1195-1211), to whom he dedicated many *qaṣīdas*. In one poem he



addressed himself to the Saljuq sultan Rokn-al-Dīn Ṭoġrel III (571-90/1176-94). Ṣahīr is said to have abandoned court poetry to withdraw into a secluded life during his final years.

Ṣahīr became especially known as a panegyrist who has been often compared to Anwarī and Kāqānī, the masters of the courtly *qaṣīda* of his age. He wrote, however, in a simpler and more fluent style, avoiding the excessive use of learned allusions and Arabic words. Edward G. Browne judged his verse as being “polished, graceful,” but also “rather insipid” and “without the occasional outbursts of invective, satire, or deep feeling which redeem the poems of Anwarī and Khāqānī” (p. 414). The influence of Anwarī, which is evident in Ṣahīr’s *qaṣīdas*, led in the 13th century to a debate on the respective merits of the two poets, in which Majd b. Hamgar and Emāmī Heravī participated (cf. *Dīvān-e Anwarī* I, editor’s introd., pp. 108-10). A critical note on his extravagant use of hyperbole was made by Sa’dī in a line of his *Būstān* (p. 40, v. 196, comm., p. 225). Ḥāfeẓ referred to the “good poetry of Ṣahīr” in one of his *ġazals* (*Dīvān*, no. 251, v. 13).

Although Ṣahīr never reached the classical status of his two great contemporaries, his poetry did not fall into oblivion either, as witnessed by the great number of manuscripts known (cf. Monzawī, *Noskaha* III, pp. 2421-25 and Storey/de Blois, pp. 558-61). Since the 19th century his *Dīvān* has been printed several times, both in Persia and in India. A few early manuscripts contain a preface written shortly after the poet’s death by an anonymous collector of his poems (see, for instance, Sprenger, p. 579; Rieu, pp. 151-52; perhaps the collector’s name was Šams Sojāsī; cf. Storey/de Blois, pp. 536, 558). There are, however, at least two other ancient collections recorded, marked by different incipits (cf. Duda, p. 70 with Ethé, no. 584). The main substance of Ṣahīr’s poetry consists of his *qaṣīdas* and *moqaṭṭa’āt*, the latter belonging mostly to the genre of panegyrics. He also left a number of *ġazals* and quatrains, two *tarkīb-bands*, and a few lines in *matnawī*.

An assessment of his contribution to the development of the *ġazal* is thwarted by an unfortunate confusion in some printed versions of his *Dīvān*. To judge from the descriptions of the early manuscripts, his output of *ġazals* must have been rather small. The set of about three hundred poems published under his name (e.g., in the lithographed edition, Cawnpore, 1295/1878, and the edition by H. Rażī, Tehran, 1338 Š./1959) consists primarily of *ġazals* by Ṣahīr-al-Dīn Šīrāzī, a 16th-century poet of Shi’ite persuasion (cf. ‘Awfī, ed. Nafisī, pp. 733-34 and Storey/de Blois, p. 558). Sometimes also the *qaṣīdas* of his contemporary



Šams Ṭabasī have been mixed with Ṣahīr’s poetry. A first attempt to purge the *Dīvān* from these false additions was made by Taqī Bīneš (Mašhad, 1337 Š./1958), but a proper critical edition on the basis of the available medieval manuscripts is still needed.

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