



JĀME' AL-TAMṬIL

JĀME' AL-TAMṬIL, a collection of Persian proverbs and their stories compiled in 1045/1644 by Moḥammad-'Ali Ḥablarudi (variant readings Ḥilarudi, Jabalrudi). The only known biographical information about the author is that he apparently originated from Māzandarān, lived in Golkonda, and evidently was attached to the court of 'Abd-Allāh Qoṭbšāh (r. 1626-83). The denomination Ḥablarudi is said to refer to the Ḥablarud, a river rising in the Firuzkuh mountain range in Māzandarān (Ja'fari, pp. 199-201). As a mature man Ḥablarudi appears to have been attracted by contemporary Muslim Indian civilization, in which Persian was the language of court and literature. The author himself mentions that he compiled two books during the reign of 'Abd-Allāh Qoṭbšāh while residing in the Deccan kingdom of Golkonda, situated in the vicinity of the South Indian city of Hyderabad. Ḥablarudi's first collection, *Majma' al-amṭal*, was compiled in 1049/1639 (ed. Šādeq Kiā, Tehran, 1965). Being the first scholar ever to do so in Persian, he assembled as many proverbs as they became available to him and eventually compiled them in an alphabetically arranged collection, titled *Majma' al-amṭāl*, listing some 2,100 proverbs.

Ḥablarudi himself must already have been aware of the fact that the task of mere documentation was only a first step, since many of the proverbs were hard to understand without explanation, and with the passing of time were likely to become altogether unintelligible. Accordingly, his next step was to elaborate and expand on his first work, adding many new proverbs and incidents or stories connected with their use. The ensuing work, titled *Jāme' al-*



tamṭil (or, less commonly, *Majma' al-tamāṭil*) was compiled in 1644. Though *Jāme' al-tamṭil* is, according to Šādeq Kiā's enthusiastic assessment, probably the most often printed book in the Persian language, no reliable modern prints or critical editions are available. Manuscripts of both of Ḥablarudi's works are numerous, the oldest one dating from the 17th century (Monzawi, V, pp. 3549 ff.), yet *Jāme' al-tamṭil* still today is primarily available in the cheap and uncritical editions produced for bazaar bookstalls, sidewalk peddlers, and itinerant merchants (Shcheglova, no. 1491; Marzolph, 1994, no. XVII). The earliest printed edition, lithographed, and containing a total of thirty-three illustrations, dates from the year 1269/1852 (Marzolph, forthcoming).

In contrast to the additive technique of *Majma' al-amṭāl*, the *Jāme' al-tamṭil* does not simply add stories to the proverbs wherever feasible. Instead, it offers a choice of proverbs arranged alphabetically in twenty-eight chapters (*bāb*), while specific topics are dealt with more extensively in separate paragraphs (*faṣl*). These elaborations (on *boql* "stinginess," *tawakkol* "trust in God," *ṭawāb* "heavenly reward," etc.) stress the essential moral quality of Ḥablarudi's work, which is further underlined by the interpretations added to many stories, expressly reading "My dear friend, I have quoted this proverb in order to make you understand that" Within this framework, and somewhat reminiscent of the European catalogues of virtues and vices, Ḥablarudi quotes a large number of popular stories and folktales from such sources as *Barlaam and Josaphat* (q.v.; Pers. *Belawhar o Budāsaf*) and *Kalila wa Demna*. Other sources he expressly acknowledges include *Majma' al-amṭāl* by Abu'l-Faḏl Aḥmad Maydāni, *Rabi' al-abrār wa foṣuṣ al-aḳbār* by Abu'l-Qāsem Maḥmud Zamaḳṣari, and the unidentified works *Baḥr al-sa'āda* and *Meftāḥ al-da'awāt*. The link between a story and a specific proverb or proverbial expression is not always a close one. Often, and increasingly so towards the latter half of the book, the author quotes stories in connection with a certain range of proverbs or a specific moral theme. In this way, *Jāme' al-tamṭil* not only constitutes a unique indigenous compilation inaugurating the field of Persian paremiology but also an important document for the international dissemination of popular tales.



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