



# JĀMI I. LIFE AND WORKS

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## JĀMI

### i. LIFE AND WORKS

#### LIFE

Though born in the hamlet of *Ḳarjerd*, Jāmi would take his penname from the nearby village of *Jām* (lying about midway between Mashad and Herat), where he spent his childhood. Before coming to Khorasan sometime in the 14th century, the family resided in the *Dašt* district of Isfahan, with which Jāmi's father, *Aḥmad Dašti*, was still identified. In *Jām*, *Aḥmad* was a prominent member of the community, and his house was frequented by the learned and the pious. One of Jāmi's biographers, *Ne-zāmi Bāḳarzi* (p. 50), relates that the renowned *Naqš-bandi* Shaikh *Ḳvāja Moḥammad Pārsā* stopped there on his way to Mecca, showing special favor to the five-year-old 'Abd-al-Raḥmān. Though this story was probably invented to explain Jāmi's later spiritual affiliation, it does indicate that his father had the learning and wherewithal to provide Jāmi with his earliest education in Persian and Arabic letters. When Jāmi entered his teens, he and his father moved to Herat where he pursued further education in theology, Arabic grammar, and literature. Here the young Jāmi soon established himself as a brilliant, though somewhat arrogant young scholar, a reputation he consolidated in *Samarqand* (Samarkand), the principal center of learning in Khorasan in the first half of the 15th century (*Māyel-Heravi*, pp. 33-35). Jāmi continued his studies in *Samarqand* and Herat throughout his twenties, displaying a prodigious memory and powerful



intellect in all fields of learning from Hadith study to astronomy and mathematics.

It was during this period of his life, according to Şafi Kāşefi (I, p. 238-39), that Jāmi fled Herat after an unsuccessful love affair and again sought refuge in scholarship in Samarqand. But no sooner had he arrived there than he saw the Naqşbandi Shaikh Sa'd-al-Din Kāşgari in a dream; the shaikh instructed him to leave his studies, go back to Herat, and take up the Sufi path. Though we may question this explanation, Jāmi does seem to have gone through a spiritual crisis sometime in his thirties, and he did, in fact, return to Herat, give up his scholarly career, and embark upon the Sufi path under Sa'd-al-Din's direction. The close relations between the Naqşbandi order and the Timurid dynasty would decisively shape the rest of Jāmi's life. It was apparently at about this time and through the influence of Sa'd-al-Din that Jāmi was first introduced to the royal court; one of his earliest surviving works, *Helya-ye ḥolal*, dates from 1452 and is dedicated to the Timurid ruler, [Abu'l-Qāsem Bābor](#). Jāmi maintained his affiliation with the court in Herat when the Timurid Abu Sa'id b. Moḥammad came to power in 1457, and he dedicated the first recension of his *divān* to this ruler in 1463. Abu Sa'id's religious advisor and spiritual counselor was, in turn, the Naqşbandi Shaikh K̄vāja 'Obayd-Allāh Aḥrār (q.v.), and he and Jāmi would maintain a close and mutually beneficial relationship for most of the next three decades. K̄vāja Aḥrār filled the spiritual void in Jāmi's life left by the death of Sa'd-al-Din in 1456, and Jāmi apparently lent K̄vāja Aḥrār and his order a cultural and scholarly legitimacy while serving as its semi-official representative in Herat. Under the impact of meeting K̄vāja Aḥrār, Jāmi began his first major poetic work, the first book of *Selselat al-ḍahab* ('The Chain of Gold'), and wrote the first of his Arabic commentaries (*Naqd al-noşuş fi şarḥ naqş al-foşuş*, 1459) on the works of the great Andalusian theosopher [Ebn al-'Arabi](#), whose ideas played a central role in Naqşbandi teachings. K̄vāja Aḥrār was active primarily in Transoxiana, and he and Jāmi did not have the face-to-face relationship typical of the Sufi master-disciple relationship, but Jāmi did travel north from Herat on several occasions to meet with K̄vāja Aḥrār in Samarqand, Merv, and Tashkent.

When [Sultan Ḥosayn Bāyqarā](#) seized power in Herat in 1470, Jāmi was a respected teacher and spiritual leader in the city and had already established close ties with Sultan Ḥoseyn's powerful advisor and vizier, 'Alişir Navā'i. When Jāmi was setting out to go on pilgrimage to Mecca in 1472, he entrusted 'Alişir with his personal affairs in his absence, and Sultan Ḥoseyn equipped



Jāmi's entourage and provided him with letters of introduction to the local rulers he would encounter on his way (Bākarzi, pp. 160-64). Traveling west through Nishapur, Semnān, and Qazvin, Jāmi received a warm welcome from Shah Manučehr, the governor of Hamadān, to whom he dedicated his famous mystical treatise *Lawāyehá* ('Flashes,' see Māyel-Heravi, p. 44). From Hamadān, Jāmi proceeded to Baghdad, where he resided for some six months in 1472-73. When Jāmi went to visit the shrine city of Karbala, a disgruntled servant capitalized on verses from *Selselat al-dahab* that attack religious 'dissenters' (*rawāfeẓ*), to stir up the Shi'ite population of Baghdad against him. Jāmi was brought before a public assembly in the presence of local authorities to defend himself (Şafi Kāşefi, I, pp. 256-57). Although he was able to exculpate himself from the charges against him, his bitter feelings against the city and its populace are evident from a ghazal he wrote about this time (*Divān*, ed. Afsaḥzād, I, p. 778-79). Nevertheless, Jāmi stopped at the tomb-shrine of 'Ali b. Abi Ṭāleb in Najaf, and the poem memorializing his visit shows a devotion to the family of the Prophet that transcends sectarian differences (see *Divān*, ed. Afsaḥzād, I, pp. 54-56). After performing the rites of the *ḥajj* in May 1473, Jāmi began his return trip to Khorasan, stopping in Damascus and Aleppo. While in Aleppo, he received an invitation from the Ottoman Sultan Moḥammad II (Mehmet the Conqueror) to join his court in Istanbul. Not swayed by the money and gifts that accompanied this invitation, Jāmi moved quickly to avoid these golden shackles and headed to Tabriz and the court of Uzon Ḥasan. Although he was warmly welcomed by the Āq Qoyunlu ruler, Jāmi declined his invitation to remain in the city and finally arrived back in Herat in January 1474. In addition to its religious purposes, Jāmi's pilgrimage served to enhance his reputation and establish a network of political and scholarly connections that extended across the Persianate world.

Shortly after his return to Herat, an event took place that helped consolidate his standing with Sultan Ḥosayn and 'Ališir. According to Bākarzi (pp. 196-98), the sons of Abu Sa'id in Transoxiana regarded Herat as part of their patrimony and planned a campaign against Sultan Ḥosayn. Despite the rumor that his mentor K̄vāja Aḥrār had given his blessing to this campaign, Jāmi stood in defense of Sultan Ḥosayn. His position with the court was further strengthened when 'Ališir joined the Naqşbandi order, with Jāmi as his spiritual director. For the last fifteen years of Jāmi's life, he, Sultan Ḥosayn, and 'Ališir constituted a religious, military, and administrative 'triumvirate' governing Khorasan. Despite his status, wealth, and influence, Jāmi lived simply and unostentatiously in the district of K̄iyābān-e Herāt, just outside of



the city. Sometime after his return from the pilgrimage, he married the granddaughter of his first spiritual guide, Sa'd-al-Din Kāšgari. Of the four children born of this marriage, only one survived infancy. Jāmi composed a strophic elegy on the death of his second child, Ṣafi-al-Din Moḥammad in 1475 (*Divān*, ed. Afsaḥzād, I, pp. 164-69). His third and surviving son, Žiyā'-al-Din Yusof, was born in 1477, and Jāmi would eventually write the *Bahārestān* (1487) and a treatise on Arabic grammar, *al-Fawā'ed al-ziyā'iyā* (1492), as manuals for his education. Although Jāmi often complains of the ills of old age (Afsaḥzād, p. 136), he made a final trip to Samarqand to visit K̄vāja Aḥrār (Ṣafi Kāšefi, I, pp. 249-51) and, as will be seen below, entered his most productive period as a writer and scholar in the 1480s. Two years after mourning the death of his spiritual guide, K̄vāja Aḥrār, in 1490 (*Divān*, ed. Afsaḥzād, II, p. 454-59), Jāmi died after a brief illness on November 9, 1492. He was over eighty years old, and at the time he was the most renowned writer in the Persian-speaking world, receiving appreciation and payment for his works from as far away as India and Istanbul.

#### LITERARY WORKS

Jāmi's active career as a writer extended over almost fifty years, and he wrote a prolific amount of poetry and prose in both Persian and Arabic. He turned his hand at one time or another to every genre of Persian poetry and penned numerous treatises on a wide range of topics in the humanities and religious sciences. Wāleḥ of Daghestan (I, p. 487) and other later biographers have claimed that the number of Jāmi's works matches the numerical value of his name according to the *abjad* system, for a total of 54, but such a happy coincidence is no doubt too good to be true, and Sām Mirzā's list of 47 titles (pp. 144-46) is probably closer to the truth. Accurately ascertaining the extent of Jāmi's corpus, however, is made difficult by the sheer number of surviving manuscripts and the multiple titles by which some of his works are known. A'lākān Afsaḥzād provides the most reliable inventory to date (*Divān*, ed. Afsaḥzād, II, pp. 8-12; Afsaḥzād, pp. 154-241), and his findings provide the basis for the following account.

*Poetic Works.* In its final recension, prepared at the request of 'Alīšir Navā'i in 1491, Jāmi's *divān* is divided into three separately titled sections: *Fāteḥat al-šabāb* ('Opening of Youth'), *Wāsiṭat al-'eqd* ('Middle of the Necklace'), and *Kātemat al-ḥayāt* ('The End of Life'). The titles and arrangement, however, are somewhat misleading. Containing more than 9,000 verses, the first section is longer than the other two sections combined. A prose introduction preserved



in some manuscripts shows that Jāmi first compiled his (untitled) *divān* in 1463 and dedicated it to Sultan Abu Sa'īd. Afsaḥzād argues (*Divān*, ed. Afsaḥzād, I, pp. 7-17) that Jāmi revised this *divān* in 1468 and again in 1475, when he added the poems that he had written on his pilgrimage; a final version of this *divān* was then completed in 1479, for which he wrote a new introduction dedicating the work to Sultan Ḥosayn Bāyqarā. Despite its title, then, *Fāteḥat al-šabāb* contains the lyric poetry that Jāmi wrote from the beginning of his writing career to his mid-60s, a period of some three decades. The bulk of the volume consists of some 1,000 *ghazals*, but it also includes poems in all the prevalent shorter forms: *qaṣida*, *tarji'*- and *tarkib-band*, *qeṭ'a*, and *robā'i*, as well as thirteen short *matnawis*. In addition to poems on the sort of mystical and religious themes most associated with Jāmi, this *divān* also contains a number of panegyrics to various rulers, such as Abu Sa'īd, Jahānšāh Qarā Qoyunlu, Sultan Ya'qub, and Mehmet the Conqueror, thanking them for gifts or congratulating them on the completion of building projects. According to the datable occasional poems it contains, Jāmi's second *divān*, *Wāsiṭat al-'eqd*, was apparently compiled around 1489. Again consisting mostly of *ghazals*, it is half as long as its predecessor and less diverse formally and thematically; perhaps its best-known poem is the autobiographical *qaṣida* entitled *Rašḥ-e bāl be-šarḥ-e ḥāl* (*Divān*, ed. Afsaḥzād, II, pp. 35-39). Half as long again is the third *divān*, compiled a year or two later; in addition to *ghazals*, *qeṭ'as* and a few *qaṣidas*, it contains Jāmi's famous stanzaic elegy on the death of K̄vāja Aḥrār.

Jāmi's seven long *matnawis* are known collectively as *Haft owrang* (*awrang*) ('The Seven Thrones' or 'The Constellation of the Great Bear'). The first of these *matnawis*, *Selselat al-dahab* ('The Chain of Gold'), is the most lengthy of the set and took the longest to compose. Although all three of its three books or *daftar*s are modeled after Sanā'i's *Ḥadiqat al-ḥaqqat*, they might almost be considered independent works. The first *daftar* was written between 1468 and 1472, and it was verses from this work that caused Jāmi so much trouble in Baghdad. Like its model, the work treats a variety of ethical and didactic themes, illustrated by short anecdotes, and is notable for its critique of contemporary society. The second *daftar* of *Selselat al-dahab*, composed over a decade later in 1485, is of similar structure, but more unified in theme, dealing throughout with the varieties of carnal and spiritual love. The third *daftar* was written a year later and dedicated to the Ottoman Sultan Bāyazid II and serves as a short conclusion to the whole work.



The remaining six works of the *Haft ovrang* were completed in an intensive creative outburst of little more than five years. *Salāmān o Absāl* was dedicated to another distant patron, Sultan Ya‘qub Āq Qoyunlu; the year of its composition is usually given as 1480, but Māyel-Heravi has argued for a date as late as 1484 (pp. 173-76). Based on an allegorical tale first alluded to in Avicenna’s *al-Ešārāt wa’l-tanbihāt* and narrated in full in Našir-al-Din Ṭusi’s commentary, *Salāmān o Absāl* tells the story of the misguided carnal love of the Greek prince Salāmān for his nurse Absāl, and the purification of his desires in a conflagration that consumes his lover (Dehghan, pp. 118-22). The work gained some renown outside Persia thanks to the English version by [Edward FitzGerald](#), the famous translator of ‘Omar Ḳayyām (London, 1856; see Arberry, 1956).

The year 1481 saw the composition of two maṭnawis similar in both title and structure. Written in response to Neẓāmi Ganjavi’s *Maḳzan al-asrār* (and Amir Ḳosrow’s *Maṭla‘ al-anwār*), *Toḥfat al-aḥrār* (‘Gift of the Free’) contains twenty discourses (*maqāla*) on various religious and moral themes paired with illustrative anecdotes and, as its title suggests, was dedicated to Jāmi’s spiritual guide, Ḳvāja Aḥrār. *Sobḥat al-abrār* (‘Rosary of the Pious’) is similarly divided into forty “knots” (*‘aqd*), each of which is devoted to a principle of the Sufi way. The central work of the *Haft ovrang*, it is written in a meter that has no precedent in the maṭnawi tradition.

In 1483, Jāmi again undertook a single continuous narrative in *Yusof o Zoleykā*, the most celebrated of his maṭnawis. It follows the meter of Neẓāmi’s [Ḳosrow o Širin](#), but its story is based on the twelfth chapter of the Qur’ān, the story of Joseph (Yusof), narrating the passionate, unrequited love of Zoleykā (Potiphar’s wife) for the prophet Joseph, but extending the story to the eventual union and death of the protagonists. As Browne (III, p. 531) notes, this work was translated several times into European languages in the 19th century. Like Neẓāmi and Amir Ḳosrow before him, Jāmi took up the famous Bedouin tale of [Leyli o Majnun](#) for the sixth volume in the *Haft ovrang*, completing the work in 1484. Finally, a year later, after completing the last installments of *Selselat al-daḥab*, Jāmi turned to the Alexander legend for the final volume of his heptad, *Ḳerad-nāma-ye Eskandari* (‘The Alexandrian Book of Wisdom’). While this work adopts the heroic *motaqāreb* meter utilized by Neẓāmi in his *Eskandar-nāma*, Jāmi devotes relatively few verses to the story of Alexander’s adventures and instead turns his attention to stories and teachings of the various philosophers and wise men whom Alexander



encounters on his journeys.

*Prose works.* The nearly 39,000 lines of verse that make up Jāmi's poetic oeuvre already make him one of the most prolific poets in the classical tradition. But when one considers the thirty-plus prose works that survive from his pen, his literary productivity is truly staggering. Mention has already been made of the *Bahārestān*, a work in mixed prose and verse in imitation of Sa'di's *Golestān* that Jāmi ostensibly wrote for his son's education in 1487 (most recently ed. Afsaḥzād, Tehran, 2000).

Given his long affiliation with and high standing in the Naqšbandi order, it is not surprising that many of Jāmi's prose works are devoted to the practice and teaching of Sufism. One of the earliest and most famous of such works is the *Lawāyeḥ* (The Flashes), composed in 1465-66 and dedicated to the Qarā Qoyunlu ruler Jahānšāh. Modeled on Aḥmad Ġazālī's *Sawāneḥ*, it consists of a series of mystical meditations in mixed prose and poetry. It has been edited several times in recent years (ed. Mo-ḥammad Ḥosayn Tasbiḥi, Tehran, 1964; Yann Richard, Paris, 1982; and most recently Afsaḥzād in *Bahārestān*, pp. 445-81), and has been translated into both English (E. H. Winfield, London, 1928; William Chittick, in Sachiko Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light*, Albany, 2000) and French (Yann Richard, Paris, 1982). Perhaps even more widely known is the large collection of Sufi hagiographies that Jāmi composed after returning from his pilgrimage to Mecca, *Nafaḥāt al-ons men ḥazarāt al-qods* (Breaths of intimacy from presences of sanctity). It was translated into Ottoman Turkish (Istanbul, 1872) shortly after its completion by Lamē'i Çelebi (d. 1532) and into Arabic a few decades later by Moḥammad b. Zakariyā b. Solṭān 'Abšami (d. 1640) (Cairo, 1989). The Persian text appeared in numerous lithograph editions in India, and there are two modern print editions (ed. Mehdi Towḥidipur, Tehran, 1958; and ed. Maḥmud 'Ābedi, Tehran, 1991). The unpublished *Jāme'-e soḳanān-e K'vāja Pārsā* (date unknown, in Persian and Arabic) collects the sayings and sermons of the famous Naqšbandi shaikh, accompanied by Jāmi's own commentary. The practice of *dekr*, the communal recitation of pious formulas often ending in ecstatic transport, was a controversial doctrinal issue in Naqšbandi circles, and Jāmi treated the topic in his *Resāla-ye šarāyeṭ-e dekr* (date unknown; ed. Juyā Jahānbakš in *Bahārestān*, pp. 483-91); the work is also known as *Resāla-ye tariq-e K'vājagān* and was published under the title *Resāla-ye sar-rešta* in Kabul in 1963. Finally, the *Resāla fi'l-wojud* (in Arabic, date unknown) deals with the concept of the "unity of being," central to the teachings of Ebn al-'Arabi and taken up by the



Naqšbandi order.

Many of Jāmi's mystical writings take the form of commentaries on earlier works. Two commentaries on Ebn al-'Arabi's magnum opus, *Foşuş al-ḥekam*, mark the beginning and end of Jāmi's career. *Naqd al-nosÂusÂ fi şarḥ-e Naqş al-fosÂusÂ*, a commentary on Ebn al-'Arabi's own abridgement of *Foşuş al-ḥekam*, was written in 1458-59, around the time when Jāmi first came under the influence of K̄vāja Aḥrār (ed. William Chittick, Tehran, 1977). In 1490-91 near the end of his life, Jāmi undertook an Arabic commentary on the full text of the *Foşusá* entitled *Şarḥ Foşuş al-ḥekam*, his last major mystical work (ed. 'Aşem Ebrāhim al-Kayyālī al-Ḥoseynī al-Şādēlī al-Darqawī, Beirut, 2004). The Egyptian poet Ebn al-Fāreż was one of the earliest Arabic poets to give literary expression to the theosophy of Ebn al-'Arabi, and Jāmi wrote commentaries on two of his most famous poems: *Şarḥ-e qaşida-ye tā'īya-ye Ebn Fāreż* (in *Bahārestān*, pp. 409-38), and *Lawāme' fi şarḥ-e qaşida-ye mimiya-ye kamriya-ye Fāreżīya* (ed. Ḥekmat Āl-āqā, Tehran, 1962; in *Bahāre-stān*, pp. 339-406). Both works apparently date from the 1470s. In Persian, Ebn al-'Arabi's earliest poetic proponent was Fakr-al-Dīn 'Erāqī, and Jāmi wrote a commentary on his famous treatise *Lama'āt* in 1481, entitled *Aşā'āt al-lama'āt* (ed. Ḥāmed Rabbānī in *Ganj-e 'erfān*, Tehran, 1973). The first two verses of the *Maṭnawī-ye ma'nawī* of Mowlānā Rumi are the subject of a brief treatise entitled *Resāla-ye nā'īya*, also known as *Ney-nāma* (in *Bahārestān*, pp. 325-36). *Şarḥ-e beyt-e Amir Kōsrow*, as its title indicates, is a short treatise on a verse from one of Amir Kōsrow's qaşidas and interprets the Islamic profession of faith from the perspective of Ebn al-'Arabi's teachings. Finally, Jāmi subjected his own poetry to an extensive mystical commentary in *Şarḥ-e robā'iyāt*, a commentary on 46 of his own quatrains, which draws on numerous works of the school of Ebn al-'Arabi and his Naqşbandi followers (ed. Najib Māyel-Heravi, Kabul, 1964).

Aside from his works on Sufism, Jāmi also wrote a number of works on more traditional topics of Islamic theology. *Şawāhed al-nobuwwa*, 'Witnesses of Prophethood,' was written at the request of 'Alīşir Navā'ī as a sequel to *Nafaḥāt al-ons*, extending the spiritual history of Islam back to the Prophet and his companions (for a summary of its contents, see Browne, III, p. 513). Commonly known as *al-Dorra al-fākera* ('The Splendid Pearl'), the epistle *Taḥqiq al-maḍāheb* was written in Arabic at the request of Mehmet the Conqueror around 1481. In it, Jāmi compares the perspectives of Sufis, theologians (*motakallemin*), and philosophers with regard to a number of key doctrinal issues. An edition of the text has been published by Nicholas Heer and 'Ali



Musavi-Behbehāni (Tehran, 1979) and translated into both Italian (Martino Mario Moreno, Naples, 1981) and English (Nicholas Heer, Albany, 1979). Also dating from 1481 is *Čehel ḥadiṭ*, or *Arbaʿeyn ḥadiṭ*, a versified Persian translation of forty of the sayings of the Prophet (ed. Kāẓem Modir-Šānači, Mashad, 1984; in *Bahārestān*, pp. 311-23). Jāmi also wrote a guide to the pilgrimage during his journey to Mecca in 1473, entitled *Resāla-ye manāsek-e ḥajj*. A longer work on the same topic, reported by Lāri (p. 39), is lost. Finally, mention should be made of two very brief theological works *Šarḥ-e ḥadiṭ-e Abi Zarrin al-ʿAqili* and *Resāla-ye soʿāl o jawāb-e Hendustān*, as well as two uncompleted works: a *tafsir* on the Qurʾān and a commentary on *Meftāḥ al-ḡeyb* by Šadr-al-Din Qonyavi, an early student of Ebn al-ʿArabi.

In addition to his mystical and theological writings, Jāmi's oeuvre contains a variety of treatises on literary topics. He composed no less than four treatises on *moʿam-mā* ('riddles' or 'logogriphs'), which were the height of literary fashion in the 15th century (Losensky, pp. 154-60). The first and longest of these, *Ḥelya-ye ḥolal* (The Ornament of Ornaments) is Jāmi's earliest datable prose work. Also known as *Resāla-ye kabir dar moʿammā*, it sets out to clarify some of the obscure points in an earlier treatise on the topic by Šaraf-al-Din ʿAli Yazdi and was dedicated to the Timurid ruler Abu'l-Qāsem Bābor in 1452 (ed. Najib Māyel-Heravi, Mashad, 1982). The *Resāla-ye motawasseṭ dar moʿammā* explicates the logogriphs contained in a twelve-verse ghazal, which yield the name and titles of Sultan Ḥoseyn Bāyqarā. A summary of the *Ḥelya-ye ḥolal*, known as the *Resāla-ye saḡir dar moʿammā*, was composed in 1480. Finally, *Resāla-ye ašḡar-e manẓum dar moʿammā* summarizes the basic rules for deriving the solutions of riddles in 68 rhymed couplets. Apart from this specialized topic, Jāmi wrote treatises on the two most basic elements of classical Persian poetic form—the concise *Resāla-ye qāfiya* on rhyme and the more comprehensive *Resāla-ye ʿarūẓ* on prosody (in *Bahārestān*, pp. 223-85 and 289-303).

Jāmi's interests extended to other areas of scholarship as well. His *Resāla-ye musiqi* treats both the modal and rhythmic systems of traditional Persian music (*Bahāre-stān*, pp. 181-220; facsimile edition and Russian translation by A. N. Boldyref, Tashkent, 1960). As an aid to the education of his son Žiāʿ-al-Din, Jāmi composed a textbook on Arabic grammar entitled *Fawāʿed Žiyāʿiya fi šarḥ al-Kāfiya* in the last year of his life. As the title indicates, this is a commentary on Ebn Ḥājeb's *al-Kāfiya fi'l-naḥw*, and it continued to be used as a textbook through the 19th century; it soon accumulated its own set of commentaries



and was perhaps the most frequently published of all of Jāmi's works with lithograph editions appearing in Istanbul, India, and Persia. Although less popular as a textbook, *Şarf-e Fārsi-ye manẓum va manẓur* seems to have been written as a companion piece to the *Fawā'id* and deals with Arabic morphology in Persian prose and verse. Finally, Jāmi also prepared a collection of his letters and extensive correspondence (*Monša'āt*), which helps map his vast network of colleagues, friends, and patrons (*Nāma-hā va monša'āt-e Jāmi*, ed. A. Urunbaev and Asrār Rahmanof, Tehran, 1999).

#### JĀMI'S POETICS AND HIS LITERARY REPUTATION

Perhaps the most striking feature to emerge from even a cursory survey of Jāmi's vast oeuvre is its constant reference to the literary past. This is obviously true of his commentaries, but nearly all of his poetic writings too are modeled in one way or another on earlier works. The *Bahārestān* looks back to Sa'di's *Golestān*, his maṭnawis revisit stories, themes, and structures first developed by Sanā'i, Neẓāmi, and Amir Ƙosrow, and even his autobiographical qaṣida *Rašḥ-e bāl be-šarḥ-e ḥāl* takes its cue from a similar poem written by Kasā'i some five centuries before. Jāmi's comprehensive knowledge of the earlier poetry and the traditional canons of criticism is also evident throughout the seventh chapter of *Bahārestān*, devoted to the lives of poets. Classical Persian poetry is, of course, defined by its conventions, and there are few works in the tradition that do not draw on earlier precedents to some extent. What distinguishes Jāmi's poetics, however, is the effort to codify and consolidate the entire literary tradition up to his time, a largely conservative project that might be best characterized as neo-classical. In his ghazals, for example, Jāmi responded repeatedly to poems by Sa'di, Amir Ƙosrow, Kamāl of Khojand, and Ḥāfeẓ in the same rhyme and meter (Afsaḥzād, pp. 377-428). However, it is not the writing of response poems itself, but the way of writing them that distinguishes Jāmi's poetics. In general, his responses stick close to the theme of their model, regularize its structure, and elaborate on its images and topoi (Losensky, pp. 166-90).

Jāmi's vast neo-classical project was met with nearly universal acclaim during his lifetime. His works spread quickly throughout Persian speaking regions and were warmly received in Ottoman Turkey, where they were translated into Turkish and widely imitated. His life was celebrated in a series of biographies by his close friend 'Alīšir Navā'i and his students 'Abd-al-Ġafur Lāri, 'Abd-al-Wāse' Neẓāmi Bākarzi, and Faḳr-al-Din 'Alī Ṣafi Kāšefi. His profound impact on the literary scene of the Uzbek courts in Transoxiana is



evidenced by the constant references to him throughout Wāṣefi's *Badāye' al-waqāye'*. The large numbers of high quality manuscripts of his works preserved in the libraries of Central Asia, Turkey, and India testify to his continuing popularity in these areas over the next several centuries (Māyel-Heravi, pp. 299-300). In Persia proper, however, profound changes in politics, religion, and literary taste cast a shadow over Jāmi's reputation. The rise of the Safavids and the propagation of state-sponsored Shi'ism in effect again subjected Jāmi to a trial of his religious affiliations, similar to the one that had taken place in Baghdad. Poets of the 'realist school' (*maktab-e woqu*) in the 16th century consciously turned away from the Sufistic symbology of Jāmi's lyric poetry, while their successors in the 'fresh style' (*šiva-ye tāza*) looked past Jāmi to the classical tradition itself to find sanction for their innovations in poetic diction and imagery. It is indicative of the indifference of the seventeenth century poets to Jāmi that among the hundreds of references to several dozen poets found in Šā'eb's divan, Jāmi is mentioned only once.

However, toward the end of the 18th century, Persian poetry in Persia again entered a neo-classical period with the *bāzgašt* or 'return movement' (see BĀZGAŠT-E ADABI) and Jāmi's reputation rose accordingly. In the rejection of the stylistic norms of their immediate predecessors, Qajar critics dubbed Jāmi 'the seal of the poets' (*kātam al-šo'arā*), the last great representative of a classical tradition that died along with him at the end of the 15th century. It is in this spirit that the modern literary historian Ḍabiḥ-Allāh Šafā writes that Jāmi "must be accounted the last truly great master of Persian poetry" (IV, p. 360). But only a couple of decades later an equally prominent literary critic, Moḥammad Reżā Šafi'i Kadkani, would write: "Those who have termed Jāmi the last in the line of poets of the Persian language have been greatly mistaken;" whoever was responsible for this notion "was ignorant or ill-informed as far as direct contact with the course of [the] history of Persian poetry was concerned" (pp. 135-36). When Jāmi's reputation is judged in such terms it is impossible to reconcile the disagreement; for those ages and critics that place a high value on poetic experimentation and innovation, Jāmi makes a clear target for the attack on conservative complacency. On the other hand, to use Jāmi's accomplishments to condemn all the poetry written after him is no less a distortion of his work and his place in literary history. Any balanced evaluation of Jāmi's legacy must recognize his goals and aims as a neo-classicist. He was a prodigious and prolific talent with a vast knowledge of earlier tradition who devoted his energies throughout his long life, not to blazing new directions in the tradition, but to consolidating what had already



been achieved. His success in doing so provided a solid basis for later innovations of the poets of the ‘fresh style’ and even for the modern study of classical Persian literature. Jāmi placed a high premium on the formal qualities of poetry, fluency and elegance of diction, and immediate comprehensibility. At the same time, he rarely goes beyond a stock treatment of the standard images and metaphors of the tradition, and his works sometimes seem a comprehensive digest of literary convention. In retrospect, it appears that his reputation as a master poet during his lifetime owed much to his scholarship and political position. In his works, however, one does find perhaps the fullest summation of the long history of the integration of the Sufi theosophy of Ebn al-‘Arabi with the Persian literary tradition, and it is here that his vast erudition is seen to its best advantage.

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Afsaḥzād (2 vols., Tehran, 1999). This edition, too, is a revised reprint of editions previously published in Moscow. Recent critical editions also exist for a number of individual maṭnawis, such as *Yusof o Zoleykā* (ed. Nāṣer Nikubakt, Tehran, 1998) and *Salāmān o Absāl* (ed. Zahrā Mohā-jeri, Tehran, 1997). Editions of Jāmi's prose works are given in the text, but special note should be made of the recent publication of *Bahārestān va rasā'el-e Jāmi*, ed. A'lāḳān Afsaḥzād, et al., Tehran, 2000, which includes the work of a number of Tajik and Soviet scholars.

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