



JAWĀHER-NĀMA

JAWĀHER-NĀMA, the title of several Persian works on precious stones, gems, minerals, and metals, as well as on crafts related to them. Persian *gowhar* (or, in its Arabicized form, *jawhar*) originally means a pearl, but also a precious stone, a gem, or a jewel (Dehḵodā, s.v.). Although pearls, coral, amber, bezoars, and the like are not minerals or stones in *stricto sensu*, in medieval texts they appear together with real minerals under the non-scientific denomination of “stones.” Persian books on stones, jewels, and minerals, usually entitled *Jawāher-nāma*, closely follow their Arabic counterparts. Among the Arabic texts on precious stones, the most reputed is Abu Rayḥān Biruni’s (973-1048) *Ketāb al-jamāher fī maʿrefat al-jawāher* (written before 1035, see [BIRUNI v.](#)). Biruni mentions in his book a treatise on a similar subject written by Naṣr b. Yaʿqub Dinawari (10th-11th cents.), which was apparently already lost in his days (Biruni, tr. Said, pp. 28-29). He also refers to the treatise of Yaʿqub b. Eshāq Kendi (d. ca. 870), which he considers to be very good (Biruni, tr. Said, pp. 28-29).

The Jawāher-nāma of Moḥammad b. Abi al-Barakāt Jawhari Nišāpuri. The earliest surviving example of a *Jawāher-nāma* written in Persian appears to be the work of Farid-al-Din Moḥammad b. Abi al-Barakāt Jawhari Nišāpuri, dated 1196. The text is dedicated to Neẓām-al-Molk Ṣadr-al-Din Abu’l-Faṭḥ Masʿūd, the vizier of the Khwarazmshah Tekeš b. Il Arslan (r. 1172-1200). The author, nicknamed Jawhari, was a connoisseur of precious stones and a jewel-maker, and he was also occasionally invited to serve as an expert and mediator for royal jewels (Vesel, Afshar, and Mohebbi, p. 154). Biruni, in his time, was also



appointed to a similar position (Biruni, tr. Said, p. 47). Nišāpuri's work is divided into four chapters: 1. minerals; 2. precious stones; 3. metals; 4. various items and techniques, including *minā* (enamel) and *talāwiḥāt* (luster ware, and also porcelain and *katu*, the latter being the term for the horn of a mysterious animal or creature, a kind of unicorn, which was sometimes believed to be rhinoceros). Although some parts of the book are clearly inspired by the text of Biruni (or other, unmentioned, "ancient authors"), the major part of the work comprises anecdotes and observations based on the author's experience. Nišāpuri's information is thus based on "ancient" authors, on his own experience as a connoisseur of precious "stones," and on what he heard from merchants and reliable persons. In such a way, Nišāpuri's text can be regarded as a link between the Arabic tradition and the later Persian texts on this subject.

The text gives many details on prices of gems and pearls, on the techniques of jewelry, stone cutting, and polishing, as well as on the extraction of stones and minerals from the mines, the transformation of ores into metals, the making of swords and weapons, together with numerous indications related to other techniques (such as ceramics- and glass-making, and goldsmithing). Some pieces of Nišāpuri's information give indications to lost works of art; thus, one of the original anecdotes mentions a large green stone (probably an emerald), engraved with the image of an enthroned Sasanian king (see Grenet and Vesel). Very little is known about the biography of Nišā-puri; from his observations on pearls one can guess that he made various travels to Sirāf, Kiš, and Bahrain. These travels allowed him to collect extensive valuable information on various terms for the size, color, and price of pearls. Also very original, and of considerable importance for the knowledge of ceramics, are the formulae for metallic lustre decoration on glass and ceramics, which Nišāpuri calls *talāwiḥāt*. His *Jawāher-nāma* is therefore the earliest known Persian text dealing with technical aspects of ceramics. The most reliable copy of this text (almost complete) is dated from the 14th century and preserved in the Malek Library in Tehran. This copy has an illustration with the picture of an oven (or furnace) used for enamel and *talāwiḥāt*. Such technical illustrations are very rare, and other copies of the text (such as the ones in Tashkent) do not have this illustration. Nišāpuri's text was edited by Iraj Afšār in 2004 on the basis of its four major copies preserved in libraries of Qom, Istanbul, Tehran, and Tashkent.

Later Jawāher-nāmas. As early as 1971 Iraj Afšār pointed out that Nišāpuri's



text was probably an inspiration for later texts on precious stones, such as Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi's (1201-74) *Tansuq-nāma-ye Ilkāni* (completed ca. 1258) and Abu'l-Qāsem 'Abd-Allāh Kāšāni's *'Arā'es al-jawāher wa nafā'es al-aṭā'eb* (written in 1300; see Vesel, Afshar, and Mohebbi). In Ṭusi's text, the whole first chapter on the theory of the minerals in the sublunar world is copied from Nišāpuri's book, while the second chapter on "stones" is Ṭusi's original work. Kāšāni's *'Arā'es al-jawāher* is notably famous for its Conclusion (*kātema*) on ceramics (*kāšigari* or *ḡazāra*). However, this Conclusion, although also dealing with the metallic luster decoration, is completely different from Chapter Four of Nišāpuri's work in the formulae for making luster decoration. Besides, while Nišāpuri calls lustre *talāwihāt*, Kāšāni uses the term *rang-e doātaši* (two-fire color).

Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi's *Tansuq-nāma-ye Ilkāni* is divided into four chapters (*maqālat*): 1. on minerals; 2. on precious stones; 3. on metals; and 4. on perfumes. Abu'l-Qāsem Kāšāni's *'Arā'es al-jawāher wa nafā'es al-aṭā'eb* is probably the best known Persian text on minerals and precious stones. Its structure is similar to that of Ṭusi's work: the first part, divided in three chapters, deals with precious and semi-precious stones, and metals; the second part concerns perfumes and drugs. The conclusion (*kātema*), entitled "On the arts of ceramics," is original, and the most well-known text on ceramics in the entire Islamic world. It was first edited and translated into German in 1935 (Ritter et al.) and then translated into English in 1973 (Allan).

At later times, other texts on the subject were produced, such as an anonymous *Jawāher-nāma* (edited by Taqī Bineš) which is dated from the 15th century and related to Timurid patronage, and Moḥammad b. Maṣṣūr Daštaki's *Gowhar-nāma* (or *Jawāher-nāma-ye solṭāni*, edited by Manučeher Sotuda), which is dated 1481 and dedicated to the Āq Qoyunlu ruler Uzun Ḥasan (r. 1457-78). Both texts describe precious stones and minerals and provide references to related techniques, such as metalwork, glass-making, and making of ceramics or enamel (*minā*). These texts are therefore invaluable, not only for the description of precious stones and their relation to the goldsmithing, but also for the knowledge of related techniques and crafts. Later examples of *Jawāher-nāmas*, such as the one by Šāh-Moḥammad b. Mobārakšāh Qazvini (16th century), are listed by Storey (vol. II, pt. 3, pp. 449-55). A copy of the versified *Jawāher-nāma-ye manzum* by Rašid 'Abbāsi is recorded in the Malek Library in Tehran (Vesel, Afshar, and Mohebbi).



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