



JAWĀME' AL-ḤEKĀYĀT

JAWĀME' AL-ḤEKĀYĀT WA LAWĀME' AL-REWĀYĀT, the earliest and the most comprehensive collection of stories in the Persian language, compiled by Sadid-al-Din Moḥammad 'Awfi (d. after 1232, q.v.), the author of the earliest preserved biographical dictionary (*taḏkera*) of Persian poets. The title of the book varies somewhat in different manuscripts. For example, it is cited as *Jāme' al-ḥekāyāt wa lāme' al-rewāyāt* in manuscript no. 2229 of the Majles library (Nafisi, p. 186), *Jāme' al-ḥekāyāt wa lawāme' al-rewāyāt* in manuscript no. 1784 of Tashkent Academy of Science (Voronofsk, II, p. 402), and *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt* in manuscript no. "Or.6855" of the British Museum (Afšār, p. 672). The author, however, has called the book *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt wa lawāme' al-rewāyāt* in the preface of the book, which is borne by the early manuscripts (Qazvini, p. kb, n. 3).

'Awfi was initially engaged in translating *al-Faraj ba'd al-šedda*, the Arabic collection of stories by Qāzi Abu 'Ali Moḥassen Tanuḳi (Mo'in, p. 34), which eventually led him to compile a larger anthology of his own, the *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt*.

After the Mongol invasion of Iran, 'Awfi immigrated to Sind Province in India, where he resided in Uch (Očh), at the court of NāsĀer-al-Din Qabāja, the ruler of Sind and Multān (r. 1205-28). He served for a while as judge in Cambay, where he finished his Persian translation of *al-Faraj ba'd al-šedda*, which he called *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt*, but, encouraged by Qobāja, he began compiling a more comprehensive collection, the *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt wa lawāme' al-rewāyāt* (Qazvini, p. ka; Mo'in, pp. 25-26). After the death of Qabāja in 1228, 'Awfi went



to Delhi, where he finished the book. It was dedicated to Ayn-al-Molk Fakr-al-Din Ḥasan As'ari, but afterwards, he dedicated it to Neẓām-al-Molk Jonaydi, the minister of Altotmes/Iltutmiš (Qazvini, pp. *ka-kb*). The latest historical event mentioned in the *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt* is the revolt of Eḳtiār-al-Din Dawlatšāh Bolkā Ḳalji, the ruler of Lakahnu in the year 1230, which led Moḥammad Qazvini to conclude that the final date of finishing the book might be about 1232-33 (Qazvini, pp. *ka-kb*; 'Ali-Naqi Monzawī, p. 24).

Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt is arranged in four chapters (*qesm*), each one characterized by a special subject matter and divided into twenty-five sections (*bāb*). Each section has a title of its own and contains stories that deal with a special aspect of the general subject matter of the chapter. All in all, the book contains a total of 2,113 stories.

The first chapter is titled “On the recognition of the Almighty, the sanctity and miracles of prophets, the wonderous deeds of saints and history” (*Dar ma'refat-e āfaridgār-e ta'ālā wa taqaddos wa mo'jezāt-e anbiā' wa karāmāt-e awliā' wa tawāriḳ wa ma'āṭer-e moluk wa ḳolafā'*) with sections treating themes such as: “the excellence of fairness” (*fazl-e 'adl*), “decrees of the kings,” “craftiness of those who pass judgments (*arbāb-e ra'y*)” “anecdotes about secretaries,” “anecdotes about physicians,” etc. The second chapter is on “Praiseworthy dispositions and admirable conduct” (*Aḳlāq-e ḥamida wa siar-e marẓia*) with sections illustrating “modesty” (*ḥayā'*), “compassion and pity” (*raḥm wa šafaqat*), “generosity,” “silence and speech,” “keeping secrets” and “nobility of character” (*makārem-e aḳlāq*). The third chapter is titled “Blameworthy characters” (*Aḳlāq-e maḍmum*) containing sections on “the differences of human nature,” “thieves and anecdotes about them,” “anecdotes concerning beggars,” “reproach of ignorance,” “clever women and their subtle remarks,” and “the crafty deeds of women and their tricks.” The fourth chapter is called “On the description of people and the wonders of the seas and countries and the nature of animals,” illustrated in various section with stories on “wonders of fortune telling and their impacts,” “the accounts of successful love affairs,” “Rum, Ethiopia and India,” “the oddities of strange buildings,” “the wonders of the world of talisman,” “about the nature of beasts and wilds,” and so on ('Ali-Naqi Monzawī, pp. 28-32).

The oldest manuscript (Ancient fonds 75; see Blochet, IV, p. 28), however, has a unique arrangement different from those of others. According to Mo'in (p. 64), this is the original arrangement of the book, which was later altered as the author revised and expanded his work. It is also possible that



the original text was shorter than what we have now, but later on new stories were added either by 'Awfi himself or others (Aḥmad Monzawi, 1969-74, V, p. 3669).

Stories vary in length according to the subject. For instance, in the Ramaẓāni's facsimile edition, which contains the last fifteen sections of the first chapter (altogether 518 stories), the shortest story (a command of the caliph "Omar b. 'Abd-al-'Azis) is in four lines, while the longest story (Caesar's daughter questioning her suiters) covers nine pages (ed. Ramaẓāni, pp. 207, 381-89).

Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt is the first collection of stories in Persian, but its significance is due not only to its literary merits, but also to the fact that it contains a good deal of information of considerable historical significance. Recording historical events in the framework of story-telling was a common approach of the Persian authors of texts on practical ethics (e.g., Neẓām-al-Molk, *passim*; Sa'di, *passim*). It made the reading more enjoyable and the focal point of a story easier to remember. According to 'Awfi himself, he used a variety of sources (94 altogether), including Zoroastrian and Manichaean works, Ferdowsi's *Šāh-nāma*, Ṭabari's *Ta'riḫ al-rosol wa'l-moluk*, Abu Rayḥān Biruni's *al-Āṭār al-bāqia* and *Taḥqiq mā le'l-Hend*, Abu Ḥāmed Ġazālī's *Naṣiḥat al-moluk* and *Kimiā-ye sa'ādat*, etc. (see Nizāmud-Dīn, pp. 273-76). The book also contains a good number of stories without any indication of any sources; these stories may be based on 'Awfi's own personal experiences (Moṣaffā, p. 45). His major source, however, has been Tanuḳi's collection, which evidently led him to compile his own *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt*. There are sixty-two stories and narratives of Tanuḳi in the fourth section of *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt*, which indicate the extent of the influence of Tanuḳi's work as a model. Unfortunately, some of the sources mentioned by 'Awfi are lost, of which only fifteen are known today (see Moṣaffā, 1975, pp. 38-54).

The historical stories narrated in *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt*, despite all their literary merits and significance, are not all accurate enough to rely upon, in particular those whose sources are lost. A comparison (e.g., 5th sec. of the 1st chap.) with more reliable books on history reveals errors in names, dates, and even recording of certain historical events concerning the Caliphate period (Kāl'atbari, pp. 68-71). Some of these errors may have been made by the copyists, including those of the sources that he used. Moreover, it is not clear whether 'Awfi just copied what he found in his sources or rewrote them, not to mention the fact that some narratives may have been 'Awfi's own authorship (Bahār, p. 38).



Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt is also a worthy source of information concerning social matters. There is hardly any aspect of social interest of the time that is not addressed in this book. It covers philosophy, religions, women, poets, the aged, hazardous adventures, astronomy, ethnology, traditions, ancient monuments, natural history and physical properties of objects, etc., each one treated in a section of its own (Moṣaffā, 1973, pp. 50-51). Thus, it seems that the author intended to provide not only a collection of stories and maxims, but also an encyclopedic source of sciences of the day for his contemporaries in 13th-century India (Fouchecour, pp. 154-55). The real value of 'Awfi's contribution with this collection to the cultural history of Iran reveals itself when it is compared with the works of his predecessors. None of the latter provides such a comprehensive picture of the various aspects of Persian cultural heritage (Nezāmud-Din, p. 24). What is more, 'Awfi seems to have tried to portray an example of an ideal human being in this period, a kind, self-controlled, honest, generous, brave, patient, grateful, and sagacious man (Fouchecour, p. 157).

'Awfi's use of his sources is not only copying; he has also edited them according to his own writing style. Besides, he converted all tales and anecdotes into stories without considering their merits from a historical viewpoint (Fouchecour, p. 155).

'Awfi's prose has its ups and downs. At times it is convoluted and too florid, while, in some cases, it resembles in clarity and fluency the works of the 14th-century authors (Bahār, III, p. 38). For instance, 'Awfi's preface of the book is written in an ornate, heavy style, while the stories adapted from elsewhere still reveal their original styles despite bearing 'Awfi's editing touches ('Ali-Naqi Monzawi, p. 26).

'Awfi's method on selecting the text and his style of compiling an anthology of stories with different subject matters was an innovation in Persian literature. Its reputation, which was the main cause of establishing 'Awfi's name as a major author (see Qazvini, p. *kj*) and led to the creation of various collections by later authors, some of whom used 'Awfi's *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt* as the major source of their own work. It was also used by several later historians such as Menhāj-e Serāj, Ḥamd-Allāh Mos-ṭawfi, Ḥāfeẓ-e Abru, Henduśāh Nakjavāni, Reẓāqoli Khan Hedāyat, etc. (see Nizāmud-Din, pp. 26-30), as well as a number of Western scholars including William Ouseley, Edward Thomos, Josef Markwart, Vasilii V. Barthold, Edward G. Browne, etc. (Nizāmud-Din, pp. 31-32).



So far, 111 manuscripts of *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt*, either complete or imperfect, are known to exist in public or private libraries in Persia (38), Great Britain (19), former Soviet Union (15), India (15), Pakistan (9), Turkey (6), France (5), Germany (2), and Austria (1), and one in an unidentified private collection (see Nizāmud-Dīn, p. 111; Mo'in, pp. 50-62; Aḥmad Monzawī, 1995-97, I, pp. 308-9). Most of them are dated. The oldest known manuscript, which is kept at Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (no. Ancien Fonds 75), was copied in Tabriz in 1299-1300 (Mo'in, p. 64), about seventy years after the book had been compiled. A major distinction of this manuscript is the author's own biographical accounts, as well as the 175 extra stories that it contains, neither of which are found in other manuscripts (Mo'in, p. 64).

The fame of *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt* led to the production of several selections and translations of the book. Four selections have been identified so far. The oldest selection, compiled by 'Abd-Allāh Kāteb Eṣfahānī in 1479, is kept at Topkapi Saray Library (ms. H. 1372); the next one, dated to the 16th century, belongs to Salar Jung Library (ms. A.N. 304) in Hyderabad (Ashraf, III, p. 10); the third one in the chronological order, titled *Jawāme' al-kalam*, was compiled in 1690-91 (Pakistan National Museum, ms. N.M. 1969-313; Nuṣāhī, pp. 674-75). The latest known selection, made in 1721 at Qarṣ (a town in Eastern Turkey) by 'Alī b. Moḥammad Šervānī and called *Ketāb al-'ajāyeb wa'l-ḡarāyeb*, is kept at the British Museum (ms. Or. 1584; Rieu, II, p. 751).

Hādji Kālifa has mentioned three Turkish translations. They were rendered, in chronological order, by Ebn 'Arabšāh (d. 1450) at the order of Sultan Morād II (r. 1446-51), by Mawlānā Najātī Bey (d. 1509) for Prince Solṭān-Maḥmud (d. 1481), and by Jalālzāda Šāleh Čelebiā (d. 1565; Hādji Kālifa, p. 540; Yazıcı, p. 439). There is also a Turkish translation in Vienna Library (ms. N.F. 201), whose translator is not identified in Flügel's list (Flügel, I, p. 413). Hādji Kālifa also mentions a selection in Turkish translation by Moḥammad b. As'ad b. 'Abd-Allāh Tostari (d. after 1330; Hādji Kālifa, I, p. 540).

There are also two translations in Urdu (Aḥmad Monzawī, 1995-, I, p. 308). Teymur Basim Bayef has translated and published a selection of 250 stories with commentaries in Russian (Rasulī, p. 229).

It is unfortunate that in spite of the significant literary and historical value of the *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt* and the comprehensive study of Muḥammad Nizāmud-Dīn, no critical edition of the entire text has yet been published. The first editing attempt was by Moḥammad-Taqī Malek-al-Šo'arā' Bahār, who



published a selection of eighty-two stories in 1945 under the title *Montakab-e Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt*. Bahār's edited selection was followed eleven years later by the facsimile edition of fifteen sections of the first chapter by Moḥammad Ramažāni. The first major critical edition was published in two volumes in 1956 by Moḥammad Mo'in, covering the initial three sections of the first chapter in two volumes. In 1971, Ja'far Še'ār published a selection of stories concerning the history of Iran in the format of a school textbook, and followed it with a small selection published (1973) in the series called "Masterpieces of Persian literature" (Šāhkārhā-ye adabiyāt-e fārsi). The credit for the most comprehensive edition of the *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt* belongs to Amir-Bānu Mošaffā (Karimi), who published the critical edition of the entire third chapter in two volumes (1973-74; the 2nd vol. with the cooperation of Mažāher Mošaffā) and followed it six years later with the edition of the first part of the second chapter. The most recent edition of a part of the *Jawāme' al-ḥekāyāt* was done by Ja'far Še'ār, who first published in 1984 a selection of stories concerning the history of Iran and Islam, and three years later another selection of stories relevant only to the history of Islam.

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