



JOWZJĀNI, ABU 'OBAYD

JOWZJĀNI (JUZJĀNI), **ABU 'OBAYD** 'ABD-AL-WĀḤED b. Moḥammad, companion, literary secretary, and biographer of Avicenna (q.v.). Details of his life are scarce in the works of the bio-bibliographers. Indeed, most of them cite Jowzjāni only in passing, as a source of their entries on the life of Avicenna (e.g., Qeḏḏi, pp. 418-19; Ebn Abi Oṣaybe'a, II, pp. 1, 4, 9, 18; Bayhaqī, pp. 70, 72-75; K̄vānsāri, III, p. 170). Jowzjāni's name indicates that he or his family originated from Gowzganān (Jowz-jānān, Jowsjān, q.v.), a town near Balk (Rahim, n. 8).

According to his introduction to Avicenna's *Ketāb al-šefā'*, it appears that Jowzjāni, having learned of Avicenna's growing reputation as a philosopher-scientist, joined him in Jorjān in about 1013, when Avicenna was around thirty-two years old (Nezāmi 'Aruzi, Qazvini's commentary, p. 448, n. 7). He began taking dictation from Avicenna and organizing his writings, as well as urging Avicenna to rewrite works that had been lost and to complete projects he had not yet finished (Ebn Sina, 1952b, pp. 1-4, tr. in Gutas, 1988, pp. 38-43; see also Reisman, 2002, pp. 26-27). Jowzjāni remained with Avicenna for the next twenty-five years, that is, until Avicenna's death. Particularly important here is the fact that Jowzjāni was largely responsible for turning Avicenna's attention to writing his most extensive philosophical work, the *Ketāb al-šefā'*. Early in his career, before he met Jowzjāni, Avicenna had composed a twenty-volume work entitled *al-Ḥāṣel wa'l-maḥṣul*, now lost, a systematic commentary on the major themes of Aristotle's works (Gutas, 1988, pp. 94-98). Because only a single copy of the work remained in the hands of the original patron, and



was therefore not available to Avicenna's circle of students then in Hamadān, Jowzjāni urged Avicenna to compose another work like it, a request that Avicenna rejected. Instead, Avicenna offered to write an independent summa of philosophy, which presented Avicenna's and Aristotle's best ideas in hybridized fashion, rather than distinguished between Aristotelian lemma and Avicennian exegesis. Even though Avicenna's Neoplatonist predecessors, such as Proclus and Abu Naṣr Fārābī (q.v.), had produced extensive independent treatises in addition to their commentaries on works by Plato and Aristotle, and even though Avicenna's Arabic and Latin successors such as Ebn Roṣd (Averroes) and Aquinas continued to produce philosophical commentaries on works by Aristotle and other great figures, Avicenna's *Šefā'* marked a turning point in the history of philosophy. In addition to its division of topics, the *Šefā'*'s breadth of scope, depth of analysis and high level of sustained precision served as models for subsequent medieval European and Islamic summas. In this sense Jowzjāni was the catalyst of a significant development in the history of European and Islamic philosophy (Gutas, 1988, pp. 101-12; Rahim). Avicenna also dictated to Jowzjāni an autobiographical account of the first thirty-two years of his life, (i.e., up to the moment when he met Jowzjāni), an account that Jowzjāni then supplemented with his own biographical account of the rest of Avicenna's life, as well as with a bibliography of Avicenna's writings (ed. and tr. by Gohlman; on dating the composition of Avicenna's biography to around 421 [=1030], see Gutas, 1988, pp. 145, 198; on the two versions of Avicenna's bibliography, including an argument against Jowzjāni's authorship of the shorter version, see Reisman, 2002, pp. 119-38).

As a thinker in his own right, Jowzjāni was completely overshadowed by Avicenna. The only medieval bio-bibliographical work to devote a separate entry to Jowzjāni is Bayhaqī's *Tatemmat Šewān al-ḥekma* (pp. 117-18; summary tr. in Meyerhof, p. 162). There Bayhaqī attributes a few works to Jowzjāni, including: 1) The chapters on the mathematical sciences (i.e., arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music) in Avicenna's *al-Najāt* and *Dāneš-nāma-ye 'alā'i* (q.v.). It appears that Jowzjāni distilled these mathematical sections from the corresponding sections of Avicenna's *Šefā'* and other works of Avicenna and then appended them to *al-Najāt*, after which Jowzjāni then translated those *Najāt* passages into Persian and appended them to the *Dāneš-nāma-ye 'alā'i*; on this see Jowzjāni's Prefaces to the *Dāneš-nāma* and to the mathematical section of the *Najāt* (Gutas, 1988, pp. 113-14; Ragep and Ragep, 2004, pp. 5-7). 2) *Tafsir* (Interpretation) of problematic issues (*moškelāt*) in Avicenna's medical work, *al-Qānun fi al-ṭebb*; 3) a commentary (*šarḥ*) on



Avicenna's philosophical allegory, *Ḥayy b. Yaqzān* (on the suggestion that this work should be ascribed to Ebn Zayla, another student of Avicenna, see Gutas, 1998, p. 96); 4) *Ketāb al-ḥayawān* (Book of animals), in Persian (perhaps just a translation of Avicenna's *Ketāb al-ḥayawān* from Arabic).

The following two works are attributed to him in later bio-bibliographical dictionaries, and catalogues of manuscripts: A commentary (*ṣarḥ*) on Avicenna's poem on the soul, *al-Qaṣīdat al-'ayniya*; and *Ketāb kayfiyat tarkib al-aflāk* (on which see Saliba; Ragep, forthcoming, argues that this work is actually no more than an extract from a second work attributed to Jowzjāni on astronomy, namely, the *Ḳelāṣ kayfiyat tarkib al-aflāk*, written as a commentary on selected issues from the *Ketāb al-jawāme' 'elm al-nojum* of Abu'l-'Abbās Aḥmad Farḡāni).

In his notice on Jowzjāni, Bayhaqī states that “none of Abu 'Ali's [i.e., Avicenna's] students was less endowed [i.e., with intelligence] (*aqallo bežā'atan*) than he;” and he goes on to quote one of his own teachers as saying that in Avicenna's circle Jowzjāni was more like an acolyte (*morid*) than a student seeking to benefit from instruction (*telmid mostafid*) (Bayhaqī, p. 117). As if to illustrate this point, Bayhaqī lists a few aphorisms attributed to Jowzjāni, some of them absurdly simplified elements of Avicenna's Aristotelian and Neoplatonic metaphysics (e.g., “Existence is a good, whichever existence it may be; and the good is a desideratum), others just platitudes (e.g., “There are three things where less is better than more: association with a sultan, women, and property”). In any case, however, one cannot evaluate Jowzjāni only by the remarks of the occasionally snide Bayhaqī, who probably wanted to enhance his notices with elements not contained in the earlier bio-bibliographical dictionaries (on Bayhaqī's reliability as a bio-bibliographer, and on his tendency to embellish, see Reisman, 2003). Close examination of Jowzjāni's works is beginning to reveal that some of his contributions in the mathematical sciences such as astronomy and music, while incremental as opposed to groundbreaking, were nevertheless real. In addition to helping Avicenna build an astronomical observatory in Isfahan, Jowzjāni revised Ptolemy's equant model by proposing an alternative that, while it did not prove in the end to be viable, paved the way for subsequent departures from the Ptolemaic system by astronomers such as Nāṣir-al-Din Ṭusi (Saliba; Dhanani; Ragep, forthcoming). As for his contribution to music theory, Jowzjāni's sections in the *Najāt* and the *Dāneš-nāma-ye 'alā'i* offer some new distinctions between composing and harmonizing and between the major and



minor keys (Bineš, pp. 701-3).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Zahir-al-Din 'Ali b. Zayd Bayhaqi, *Ta'riḳ ḥokamā al-Eslam: tatemmat Şewān al-ḥekma*, ed. M. Ḥ. Moḥammad, Cairo, 1996.

Taqi Bineš and Şādeq J. Sajjādi, "Musiqi-e Ebn 'Obayd Jowzjāni," in K. M. Bojnurdi, ed., *Dā'erat al-m'āref-e bozorg-e eslāmi*, Tehran, 1989-, V, pp. 700-3.

'Ali-Akbar Deh-ḳodā, "Abu 'Obayd-Allāh 'Abd-al-Wāḥed b. Moḥammad Jowzjāni," *Loḡat-nāma-ye Dehḳodā*, Tehran, 1993, I, p. 540.

A. Dhanani, "Jūzjāni," in Thomas Hockey et al., eds., *Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers*, 2 vols., New York, 2007.

Ebn Abi Oşaybe'a, '*Oyun al-anbā' fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭebbā'*, ed. August Müüller, Cairo, 1882; repr, Frankfurt am Main, 1995.

Ebn al-Qeḫṭi, *Ta'riḳ al-ḥokamā'*, ed. J. Lippert, Leipzig, 1903; repr. Baghdad, 1960(?). Ebn-Sinā, *Elāhiyāt: Dāneš-nāma-ye 'alā'i*, ed. Moḥammad Mo'in, Tehran, 1952a; tr. Mohammad Achena and Henri Massé as *Le livre de science*, Paris, 1956.

Idem, *Ketāb al-şefā' I: al-manteq: al-madḳal*, ed. G. Qanawāti et al., Cairo, 1952b. D. Gutas, "Notes and Texts from Cairo Manuscripts II: Texts from Avicenna's Library in A Copy by 'Abd-ar-Razzāq aş-Şignāḫī," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 2, 1987, pp. 8-17.

Idem, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Leiden, 1988.

R. Hartmann, "Djūz-djān," *EI2* II, pp. 608-9.

Abu 'Obayd 'Abd-al-Wāḥed Jowzjāni, *Sirat Şayḳ al-Ra'is*, ed. and tr. William E. Gohlman as *The Life of Ibn Sina: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*,



Albany, 1974; tr. Ġolām-Ĥosayn Şadiqi as *Sargodašt-e Ebn Sinā*, Tehran, 1952.

Moĥammad-Bāqer Musawi al-Ķvānsāri Eşbahāni, *Rawżāt al-jannāt fi aĥwāl al-‘olamā’ wa’l-sādāt*, 8 vols, ed. A. Esmā‘iliān, Tehran and Qom. 1970-72.

Max Meyerhof, “Ali al-Bayhaqi’s Tatimmat Şiwān al-Ĥikma: A Biographical Work on Learned Men of the Islam,” *Osiris* 8, 1948, pp. 122-217.

Sa‘id Nafisi, *Zendagi wa kār wa andiša wa ruzgār-e Pur-e Sinā*, Tehran, 1954, p. 127.

Moĥammad Qazvini, “Abd-al-Wāĥed Jowzjāni,” in idem *Maqālāt-e Qazvini* V, Tehran, 1987, pp. 1375-380.

Aĥmad b. ‘Omar b. ‘Ali Neẓāmi ‘Aruzi Samarqandi, *Ĉahār maqāla*, ed. Moĥammad Qazvini, rev. Moĥammad Mo‘in, Tehran, 1954, commentary, pp. 448-53.

F. Jamil Ragep, “The *Khilāş kayfiyyat tarkīb al-aflāk* of al-Jūzjāni: A Preliminary Description of its Avicennian Themes,” in T. Langermann, ed., *Avicenna and His Legacy: A Golden Age of Science and Philosophy*, Turnhout (Belgium), forthcoming. F. Jamil Ragep and Sally P. Ragep, “The Astronomical and Cosmological Works of Ibn Sīnā: Some Preliminary Remarks,” in N. Pourjavady and Ź. Vesel, eds, *Sciences, techniques et instruments dans le monde iranien (Xe-XIXe siècle)/Tāriĥ-e ‘elm o şan‘at dar Irān (az qarn-e Ĉahārom tā sizdahom h.q., Actes du colloque tenue à l’Université de Téhéran*, Tehran, 2004, pp. 3-15.

A. Rahim, “Avicenna’s Immediate Disciples and Their Works,” in T. Langermann, ed., *Avicenna and His Legacy: A Golden Age of Science and Philosophy*, Turnhout, Belgium, forthcoming. David C. Reisman, *The Making of the Avicennan Tradition: The Transmission, Content, and Structure of Ibn Sīnā’s al-Mubāĥathāt (The Discussions)*, Leiden, 2002.

Idem, “Stealing Avicenna’s Books: A Study of the Historical Sources for the Life and Times of Avicenna,” in idem, ed., *Before and after Avicenna*, Leiden, 2003, pp. 91-126.

Ďabiĥ-Allāĥ Şafā, *Tāriĥ-e ‘olum-e ‘aqli dar tamaddon-e eslāmi* I, Tehran, 1952, pp. 287-89.



George Saliba, "Ibn Sīnā and Abū 'Ubayd al-Jūzjānī: The Problem of the Ptolemaic Equant," *Journal for the History of Arabic Science* 4, 1980, pp. 376-403.