



ḲERAD-NĀMA

ḲERAD-NĀMA, (Book of Wisdom), the shortened title of a compilation of short didactic and philosophical texts preserved in one of a dozen extant Persian manuscripts on the subject of practical philosophy from the 6th/12th century (Monzawi, p. 286; Fouchécour, p. 24, n.6). The full title *Ḳerad-nāma az maqālat-e ḥokamā* is found at the end of the seventeenth text (Ṭarwat, ed., p. 84).

There are folios missing at the beginning of the manuscript, and it contains no information concerning the identity of the author. The manuscript is divided into two parts, a collection of seventeen short texts related to ethical or *andarz* literature and another of four texts more concerned with politics and administration.

The unique manuscript of the *Ḳerad-nāma* is held at the Süleymanye Library in Istanbul (MS Nafız Paşa 328). **Mojtabā Minovi** discovered the manuscript and rearranged and numbered its disordered folios. There has been some confusion about the date of the manuscript. There are similar colophons at the end of each section (reprod. in Ṭarwat, ed., pp. 17-18), but these are difficult to decipher. Minovi at first suggested that the manuscript had “apparently” been copied in 574/1179 (Minovi, 1956, p. 58), but he also raised the possibility that the date should be read as 594/1197 (Minovi, 1969, p. 8). A date found elsewhere in the manuscript (fol. 138b; Ṭarwat, ed., p. 92) was read by Minovi as possibly 510/1116 (Minovi, 1956, p. 67). This uncertainty is reflected in Minovi’s handwritten notes on the inside folio of the cover, where he recorded “574 or 594” as the date when *Ḳerad-nāma* was copied but then crossed out both dates and added in the margin “504 or 510.” The latter date can probably



be discarded as a copyist's mistake, and it is almost certainly meant to be the date of the document being quoted (and thus would only be a *terminus post quem* for the manuscript). Maṣṣūr Ṭarwat (pp. 14, 84, 98), apparently like Minovi himself, came to the conclusion that the reading of the dates in the colophons as either 574 or 594 was not plausible and accepted 504/1110 as the correct date of the manuscript.

As for the date of the text itself, Minovi argued that the style of composition for most of the text resembles the prose style of Persian works from the 4th/10th and 5th/11th centuries (Minovi, 1956, p. 58). Ġolām-Ḥosayn Ṣadiqi (1966, p. 92) argued on the basis of stylistic considerations, especially the relatively infrequent use of words of Arabic origin, that some parts of the manuscript were probably earlier than the *Pand-nāma* of Abu Maṣṣūr Mātoridi (d. 333/944). This certainly does not apply to the second section of the manuscript, where there are references to much later figures such as *Nezām-al-Molk* (d. 1092) and other Saljuq personalities.

The seventeen chapters of the first part of *Kerad-nāma* are attributed to various Persian, Greek, and Islamic wise mensages. The first of these sages is *Bozorgmehr*, who is mentioned in the third, fourth, and sixth chapter titles. Other identifiable figures in the text include Nōširavān (Kosrow I Anuširwān), Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Diogenes, Loqmān (Aesop), the Prophet Moḥammad, 'Ali b. Abi Ṭaleb, 'Abd-Allāh b. 'Abbās, Ebrāhim b. Adham, Aḥnaf Qays, 'Abd-Allāh b. Zobayr, and Abu Ḍarr Ġefāri. Some names cannot be positively identified, such as Miyāvandus, Bimās, Balinās (most likely Apollonius of Tyana), Suṭārun, Meqrāṭis, Sārun (perhaps Solon), or Soqrāṭis (most likely Socrates; Fouchécour, p. 31).

The texts in the first part of the *Kerad-nāma* (for details and pagination, see Fouchécour, pp. 24-38) are arranged into discourses (*goftār*) on (1) worldly things and how to deal with men; (2) the knowledge of savants; (3) Bozorgmehr on points (*nokta*) related to the science of medicine; (4) on questions posed by Nōširavān to Bozorgmehr; (5) on notes found in Šāpur's treasury; (6) on Bozorgmehr's *Pand-nāma* (Book of Counsel); (7) questions posed by Alexander to Aristotle; (8) the *Pand-nāma* (Book of Counsel) by Nōširavān the Righteous; (9) rare maxims of the sages; (10) Alexander's inquiries to sages [of India]; (11) more maxims of the sages; (12) maxims of Hippocrates; (13) more unusual maxims from Hippocrates; (14a) points from the writings of Aristotle pertaining to (14b) the requisite qualities of kings and (14c) duties vis-à-vis kings; (15) the beginning of the *Farhang-nāma* (Book of



Culture); (16) maxims from *Jāvidān kerad* (Eternal Wisdom); and (17) the commencement of the *Nejāt-nāma* (Book of Deliverance, where many of the references to Muslim personalities occur).

The various texts that make up *Kerad-nāma* are generally presented in an autonomous tone with an emphasis on ethical principles. For example, the first text, with some points that must surely have reflected the thoughts of the author himself, deals with the value of human beings; the creation of wealth creation and properly administering it; the methods of trading for a merchant; dependency as the worst situation; the rules for buying land and slaves; social behavior; personal behavior; encountering enemies and friends; giving advice to the courtier, businessman, farmer, artisan and government official; giving general advice for various situations in life (Fouchécour, pp. 25-26).

The incomplete first chapter of the second part of the text was given the title “Manual for Government and Administration” by Minovi, followed by “The Testament of Neẓām-al-Molk,” “The Book of Condolence (*Tā’ziat-nāma*) from Sultan Malekšāh to Neẓām-al-Molk [on the death of his oldest son] Mo’ayyed-al-Molk,” and the last few lines of a government decree. Although this section was copied by the same scribe at the same date, it seems unlikely to have been part of the original *Kerad-nāma* text (see above on the stylistic and chronological difficulties this would involve); unlike the first section, it is not given a title in the colophon but simply called an *’ojāla* (a hastily-prepared compilation).

The diversity and novelty of the material found in the *Kerad-nāma* suggest that it was not just the creative innovation of the author, who must in fact been drawing upon actual works available to him (Fouchécour, p. 25). Unfortunately, most of the sources utilized in *Kerad-nāma* have been lost, which makes the collection a work of special significance from a historical point of view. For instance, there is no trace of any other *Farhang-nāma* in ancient Persian literature other than the one mentioned in *Kerad-nāma*, so it presumably provides the oldest available recension of that text. The most important issue in this regard concerns the author’s use of the *Jāvidān kerad* and how this material might relate to an original Middle Persian version of that text, or to the Arabic translation of it by Meskavayh (d. 421/1030), *al-Ḥekma al-kāleda*, or to some intermediary source such as the now-lost translation by Jāḥeẓ (d. 255/868-9). According to one study, approximately two-thirds of the maxims in the *Kerad-nāma* are also found in *al-Ḥekma al-kāleda* and in roughly the same order (Marcotte, p. 82; see also pp. 82-84 for an



annotated translation of this part of the text).

A related question concerns what influence the *Ḳerad-nāma* may have had on other Persian books of council counsel (Minovi, pp. 60-61). For example, some of the advice of Bozorgmehr in the third text has been mentioned in the fifth chapter of Ḡazāli's *Naṣiḥat al-moluk* (Ḡazāli, pp. 221-45); 'Onṣor-al-Ma'āli Kaykāvus has used an expanded copy of the advices mentioned in the third text of *Ḳerad-nāma* in the eighth chapter of his *Qābus-nāma* (pp. 51-55); and some parts of various texts of *Ḳerad-nāma* have been mentioned in the *Zafar-nāma*, which is attributed to Avicenna (Ṣadiqi, 1969, pp. 2, 8-9). Whether such material was taken directly from this *Ḳerad-nāma* remains uncertain.

The social and historical importance of *Ḳerad-nāma* is comparable to its philosophical significance. Whether or not the second section should be considered an integral part of the work, the texts it preserves are of some value from the viewpoint of the history of the political thought in Iran. The text of "Manual for Government" is a very important document on administering the private and personal affairs of a grand vizier, and about looking attentively into governmental affairs as understood in medieval Persia. The other important document is the last will of Neẓām-al-Molk. Such texts are useful for understanding the political situation in the Saljuqid reign system as supposedly viewed by Neẓām-al-Molk (Ṭabāṭabā'i, p. 58). The third text may have been a source for various historical narratives dealing with the assassination of Neẓām-al-Molk (Minovi, pp. 69-70).

Ḳerad-nāma was edited and printed by Ḡolām-Ḥosayn Ṣadiqi (Ṣadiqi, 1996, p. 2, and 1999, p. 92; Tafazzoli, p. 729; Dānešpažuh, p. 200), but it was never published. It has been edited and published by Maṣṣur Tarwat, but with some different rubrics and numbering of the folios from that determined by Minovi.

This text should not be confused with other works with the same or similar titles, such as the *Ḳerad-nāma* of Abu'l-Faẓl Yusof b. 'Ali Mostawfi (early 6th/12th century; ed. A. Barumand, Tehran, 1968).



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