

Naşr Allāh Munshī's *Kalīla and Dimna* – Handout

Theodore Beers, 5 April 2023

Basic details

Author: Abū al-Maʿālī Naşr Allāh Munshī, secretary (*munshī*) at the Ghaznavid court during the reign of Bahrāmshāh (510–47/1117–52)

Date of authorship: ca. 538–40/1144–46 (as estimated by Mīnuvī)

Manuscripts: many extant; the earliest, dated 551/1156 (!), is MS 1727 in the Cârullah Efendi collection at the Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul; more easily accessible is Persian MS 68, dated 616/1219, at the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester

Edition: Mujtabā Mīnuvī (Tehran, 1964)

Commentaries: see Bihruz Īmānī, ed., *Sharḥ-i akhbār va abyāt va amṣāl-i ʿarabī-i Kalīla va Dimna* (Tehran, 2011)

Translations: English, Wheeler M. Thackston (Indianapolis, 2019); German, Seyfeddin Najmabadi and Siegfried Weber (Munich, 1996); forthcoming unabridged English translation of Naşr Allāh's preface, by Theodore Beers (preprint available upon request)

Arabic poets quoted include: Labīd ibn Rabīʿa (d. ca. 41/661), al-Buḥturī (d. 284/897), al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965)

Persian poets quoted include: Farrukhī Sīstānī (d. ca. 429/1037–8), Masʿūd-i Saʿd (d. 515/1121–2), Sanāʿī (d. probably 525/1131)

Later Persian works influenced by Naşr Allāh's style (per Mīnuvī) include: Nizāmī ʿArūzī, *Chahār maqāla* (ca. 552/1157); Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Rāvandī, *Rāḥat al-şudūr* (ca. 601/1204–5); Naşīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), *Akhlāq-i Nāşiri*; ʿAṭā-Malik Juvaynī (d. 681/1283), *Tārīkh-i Jahān-gushā*

Other (New) Persian versions of *Kalīla and Dimna*:

- Prose, from the Arabic, by Abū al-Faẓl Balʿamī (d. 329/940); not extant
- Verse, by Rūdakī (d. ca. 329/940–41); snippets extant; François de Blois has lately identified more lines that may be from this work
- Prose, from the Arabic, by Muḥammad al-Bukhārī (late 1140s CE); ed. Parvīz Nātil Khānlārī and Muḥammad Rawshan (Tehran, 1982)
- Verse, from Naşr Allāh's prose, by Qānīʿī Ṭūsī (ca. 658/1260); ed. Magali Todua (Tehran, 1979)
- Prose, from a mixture of sources, by Ḥusayn Vāʿiẓ Kāshifī (d. 910/1504–5); ed. Muḥammad Rawshan (Tehran, 2009); English translation, Arthur N. Wollaston (London, 1877); see also Christine van Ruymbeke, *Kāshefi's "Anvār-e Sohayli": Rewriting "Kalila and Dimna" in Timurid Herat* (Leiden, 2016)
- Prose, based on Kāshifī, by Abū al-Faẓl ʿAllāmī (d. 1011/1602); titled ʿ*Iyār-i dānish*