

# QOṬB-AL-DIN ŠIRĀZI

**QOṬB-AL-DIN ŠIRĀZI**, **Maḥmud b. Žiā'-al-Din Mas'ud b. Moṣleḥ**, known also as 'Allāma Širāzi, al-Šāreḥ al-'Allāma, and Mollā Qoṭb and nicknamed Abu'l-Ṭanā, a Persian polymath, Sufi, and poet (b. Shiraz, October 1236; d. Tabriz, 7 February 1311; see Ebn Ḥajar, IV, p. 339; Qāšāni, p. 118). His father, Žiā'-al-Din Mas'ud Kāzeruni, was a well-known physician and a leading Sufi, who had received his *kerqa* (Sufi robe) from Šehāb-al-Din 'Omar Sohravardi, and who, in turn, as a blessing, garbed his son, the young Qoṭb-al-Din, in a Sufi robe at the age of ten. Nevertheless, Qoṭb-al-Din later received his own robe from the hands of Najib-al-Din 'Ali b. Bozḡoš Širāzi, a noted Sufi shaikh of the time (*Dorrat al-tāj*, p. 263).

Qoṭb al-Din began studying medicine, first under his father, who taught and practiced medicine at the Moẓaffari hospital in Shiraz, and, after his father's death, with his uncle and other masters of the period. He studied [Avicenna's Qānun](#) (the *Canon*) and its commentaries, including the famous commentary of Faḡr-al-Din Rāzi, with which the young Qoṭb-al-Din raised many issues, and which led to his decision to write his own commentary, where he discussed those issues and resolved many of them subsequently in the company of Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi.

Qoṭb-al-Din lost his father at the age of fourteen. He replaced his father as an ophthalmologist at the Moẓaffari hospital and, at the same time, continued his education under his uncle Kamāl-al-Din Abu'l-Ḳayr and then Šaraf-al-Din Zaki Buškāni and Šams-al-Din Moḥammad Kiši, all of whom were expert teachers of the *Qānun* (Minovi, p. 346; Barkašavi, in Ebn Ḥajar (Rokšāni in Wiedemann, 1986, p. 547). Ten years later, he quit his medical practice to devote all his time to his education, and when Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi, the renowned scholar-vizier of the Mongol Holāgu Khan (q.v.), established the observatory of Marāḡa, the young Qoṭb-al-Din was among the many scholars who were attracted to that city from all over country; he left Shiraz for Marāḡa some time after 1260 and reached Marāḡa some time about 1262 (see Qoṭb-al-Din, *al-Toḥfa al-sadiya*, MS, introduction; according to Minovi 1988, p. 347).

In Marāḡa, Qoṭb-al-Din resumed his education under Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi, with whom he studied the [al-Ešārāt wa'l-tanbihāt](#) of Avicenna, discussed the difficulties he had had in understanding the first book (*Kolliyāt*) of the *Qānun*, and, while working in the new observatory, studied astronomy under him. According to Ḳvādamir (III, pp. 116-17), on one occasion he accompanied his master, Naṣir-al-Din, to an audience with Holāgu, in which the latter said that the only reason for not killing Naṣir-al-Din was that his death would leave the astronomical table (*zij*) he was working on unfinished; Qoṭb-al-Din replied that he would complete the task; and, when asked by Naṣir-al-Din after leaving the audience whether he was serious about what he had said, the young pupil had no hesitation in giving his master the same assurance. In spite of his considerable work at the observatory, it is worth noting that neither Rašid-al-Din Faẓl-Allāh (p. 63), nor Šehāb-al-Din Waṣṣāf (pp. 51-52) makes any reference to Qoṭb-al-Din in this connection. More noteworthy,

perhaps, is the absence of Qoṭb-al-Din's name among the list of the names that Naṣir-al-Din has mentioned as his assistants in the introduction to his *Zij* (*Kašf al-ẓonun* II, p. 967; cf. Minovi, 1988, pp. 347-48). Nevertheless, in his testament (*waṣīya*), Naṣir-al-Din advises that his son Aṣil-al-Din should work with Qoṭb-al-Din on the completion of the *zij*.

Qoṭb-al-Din's stay in Marāḡa did not last very long. He traveled to Khorasan in the company of Naṣir-al-Din, where he decided to stay on to study under Najm-al-Din Kātebi Qazvini in Jovayn and work as his assistant. Some time after 1268, he set out on a journey which took him to Qazvin, Isfahan, and Baghdad, and later Konya in Anatolia, just at the time when Jalāl-al-Din Moḡammad Balkī Rumi (q.v.) was gaining fame there, and whom he reportedly met (Ebn Abi'l-Wafā', II, p. 124; Ḥāfeẓ Ḥosayn, I, pp. 326-27; Minovi, 1988, p. 349). In Konya he studied *Jāme' al-oṣul men aḡādīṭ al-rasul* of Majd-al-Din Mobārak Ebn al-Aṭir with Ṣadr-al-Din Qunawi (d. 1274), who had had a well-known correspondence with Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi; subsequently, the governor of Konya, Mo'in-al-Din Solaymān Parvāna (see [Ebn Bibi](#), p. 272-332), appointed Ṣadr-al-Din as judge (*qāzi*) of Sivas and Malatya, where he compiled *Meftāḡ al-meftāḡ*, *Eḡtiārāt al-moẓaffariya*, and his commentary on Sakkāki (Minovi, 1988, p. 350). In 1282, he was sent by the Mongol [Il-khan Ahmad Takudār](#) (r. 1282-84) as an envoy to Sayf-al-Din Qalāwun (r. 1279-90), the Mamluk ruler of Egypt (Abu'l-Fedā', IV, p.17; Ebn Qaldun, V, p. 546; Ebn al-'Emād, V, p. 370). In his letter to Qalāwun, Takudār referred to Qoṭb-al-Din as the chief judge (*aqẓa'l-qoẓāt* ; see Waṣṣāf, I, pp.113-18; [Ebn al-'Ebrī](#), p. 506-18). Later, Qoṭb-al-Din collected various critiques of and commentaries on the *Qānun* and used them in his commentary on the *Kolliyāt* (Minovi, pp. 350-51; Wiedemann, 1986, p. 547).

The last part of Qoṭb al-Din's active career was spent in Syria, where he taught the two celebrated works of Avicenna, the *Qānun* on medicine and the *Šefā'* on philosophy. He soon left for Tabriz, where he spent the rest of his life. He died on 7 February 1311 and was buried in the Čarandāb Cemetery, close to the tomb of Qāzi Bayẓāwi (q.v.). The date of his death was commemorated in chronograms and poems (Qāšāni, pp. 118-19; Ḥāfeẓ Ḥosayn, I, pp. 324, 331; Faṣiḡ K'āfi, III, p. 18). Qoṭb-al-Din had an insatiable passion for learning, evidenced by the twenty-four years that he spent collecting material and studying with masters of the time in order to write his commentary on the *Kolliyāt*; he was deservedly distinguished and remembered for his extensive breadth of knowledge as well as for his clever sense of humor and indiscriminate generosity. He was also a master chess player and played the *rabāb*, a kind of viol (Minovi, 1988, pp. 351, 355-59; Eqbāl; Wiedemann, 1986, p. 547).

*Works* (arranged by title in alphabetical order). (1) *Dorrat al-tāj fi ġorrat al-dabbāj*, also known as *Anmuzaj al-olum* and traditionally referred to by students as *Anbān-e Mollā*

*Qoṭb* or *Hemyān-e Qoṭb*, an encyclopedic work on philosophy (comp. 21 June 1306), written for Rostam Dabbāj, one of the Ešḡāqvand rulers of [Gilān](#), during his stay with the latter (Šafā, *Adabiyāt* III, pp. 240-41, 1229-30; Minovi, 1988, pp. 369-70). The parts on natural sciences, theology (*elāḡhiyāt*), logic, public affairs and the introduction were edited by Sayyed Moḡammad Meškāt (5 vols. in one, Tehran, 1938; repr., Tehran, 1986). From its part on

mathematics, the treatises on astronomy, arithmetic, and music were edited by Šādeq Sotuda (Tehran, 1945), and the section on ethics and mysticism, that is, the third and fourth sections, were edited by Māhdoḡt Bānu Homā'i (as *Dorrat al-tāj, baḡš-eḡekmat-e amali wa sayr o soluk*, Tehran, 1990). (2) *Ektiārāt-e mozaḡffari*, a treatise on astronomy in Persian in four chapters, extracted from his *Nehāyat al-edrāk* and dedicated to Mozaḡffar-al-Din Bulaq Arslān (*Kašf al-ḡonun* I, p. 35; Minovi, 1988, p. 352). (3) *Al-Entešāf*, a gloss in Arabic on Jār-Allāh Maḡmud Zamaḡšari's Qur'an commentary, *al-Kaššāf an al-ḡaqā'eq al-tanzil wa oyun al-aḡāwil* (Zerekli, VIII, p. 66). (4) *Faḡh al-mannān fi tafsir al-Qor ān*, a comprehensive commentary on the Qur'an in forty volumes, written in Arabic and also known by the title *Tafsir allāmi* (*Kašf al-ḡonun* II, p. 1235; Zerekli, VIII, p. 66). (5) *Fi ḡarakāt al-dahraja wa'l-nesba bayn al-mostawi wa'l-monḡani*, written as an appendix to *Nehāyat al-edrāk* (Wiedemann, 1986, p. 548). (6) *Hāšia bar ḡekmat al-ayn*, on theology; as indicated by the title, it is a commentary of *ḡekmat al-ayn* of Najm-al-Din 'Ali Dabirān Kātebi; Moḡammad b. Mobārakšāh Boḡāri, in his own commentary on Kātebi's book, refers also to Qoḡb-al-Din's remarks and comments on the same work by the expression "in the Qoḡb's comments" (*fi'l-ḡawāši al-qoḡbiya*; see *Kašf al-ḡonun* I, p. 685). (7) *Ketāb fa alta wa lā talom fi'l-haya*, an Arabic work on astronomy, written for Ašil-al-Din, son of Našir-al-Din ḡusi (8) *Moškelāt al-e rāb* on Arabic syntax (Minovi, 1988, p. 353). (9) *Moškelāt al-tafāsir* or *Moškelāt al-Qor ān*, on rhetoric; both Zerekli and Hāji Ḳalifa have ascribed this to Qoḡb-al-Din, although one can deduct from Hāji Ḳalifa's comments that he had not actually seen it (*Kašf al-ḡonun* II, p. 1695; Zerekli, VIII, p. 66). (10) *Meftāḡ al-meftāḡá*, a commentary on the third section of the *Meftāḡ al-olum*, a book on Arabic grammar and rhetoric by Abu Ya'qub Serāj-al-Din Yusof Sakkāki Ḳ'ārazmi (Modarres, IV, p. 471). According to Hāji Ḳalifa (*Kašf al-ḡonun*, II, p. 1763), Qoḡb-al-Din's work was the first commentary ever written on this book. According to [Dawlatšāh Samarḡandi](#) (pp. 218-19), Qoḡb-al-Din wrote this work at the request of the poet Homām Tabrizi. A manuscript of it exists in the library of the Sepahsālār Madrasa (MS 299). (11) *Nehāyat al-edrāk fi derāyat al-aflāk*, on astronomy, in Arabic, divided into four chapters, written for Bahā'-al-Din Moḡammad Jovayni, governor of Isfahan and son of Šams-al-Din Jovayni. Senān Pasha wrote a commentary on it (see *Kašf al-ḡonun* II, p. 1985; Minovi, 1988, pp. 378-79). (12) *Resāla fi'l-baraš*, a medical treatise on leprosy in Arabic (Zerekli, *A lām*, VIII, p. 66). (13) *Resāla fi bayān al-ḡājat ela'l-ḡebb wa ādāb al-aḡebbā' wa wašāyā-hom* (Zerekli, VIII, p. 66; *Fehrest al-kotob al-arabiya al-moḡfuza be'l-Kotobkāna al-ḡediwiya* VI, p. 35). (14) *Šarḡ Taḡkera naširiya*, on astronomy. Hāji Ḳalifa attributed this commentary on Našir-al-Din ḡusi to Qoḡb-al-Din on the authority of others (*Kašf al-ḡonun* I, p. 35; Šafā, *Adabiyāt*, III, p. 270). (15) *Šarḡ ḡekmat al-ešrāq Šayḡ Šehāb-al-Din Sohravardi*, on philosophy and mysticism, in Arabic. To this commentary 'Abd-al-Karim (d. ca. 1494) devoted a gloss in Persian (*Kašf al-ḡonun* I, p. 684; Minovi, 1988, pp. 371-72). A lithographed edition of this commentary was published in 1897 in Tehran (new ed. by 'Abd-Allāh Nurāni and Mahdi Moḡaḡqeq, Tehran, 2001). (16) *Šarḡ Moḡtašar al-ošul Ebn Hājeb*, a commentary on Ebn Hājeb's *Montaha'l-so āl wa'l-amal fi elmay al-ošul wa'l-jadwal*, a book on the sources of law according to the Malikite school of thought (*Kašf al-ḡonun* II, p. 1853). (17) *Sazāvār-e Efteḡār*, Moḡammad-'Ali Modarres (IV, p. 471) attributes a book by this title to Qoḡb-al-Din, without providing any information about its content (see also Deḡkodā, s.v. Qoḡb-al-Din). (18) *Tarjoma-ye Taḡrir-e Oqlides* [Euclid], a work

on geometry in Persian in fifteen chapters, completed in Šabān 681/November 1282 and dedicated to Mo'in-al-Din Solaymān Parvāna (Minovi, 1988, pp. 352, 368-69; Qorbāni, p. 430; Modarres, IV, p. 471). (19) *Al-Toḥfa al-saḍiyya*, also called *Nozhat al-ḥokamā' wa rawḍat al-aṭebbā'*; on medicine, a comprehensive commentary in five volumes on the *Kolliyāt* of the *Qānun* of Avicenna, written in Arabic. It is one of the most important works of its kind; it is dedicated to Sa'd-al-Din Moḥammad Sāvaji, the vizier of the Mongol ruler [Ġazān Khan](#) (r. 1295-1304, hence the book's title). The author died before he could complete this work. A manuscript is preserved in the Sepahsālar Library (Ketāb-kāna-ye Madrasa-ye Sepahsālār) in Tehran (Minovi, 1988, pp. 351, 361-62, 374-75). (20) *Al-Toḥfa al-šāhiyya fi'l-hay'a*, an Arabic book on astronomy, comprised of four chapters, written for Moḥammad b. Šadr-al-Sa'id, known as Tāj-al-Eslām Amiršāh. Mollā 'Ali Qušji and Sayyed Šarif Jorjāni have written commentaries on this book (Šafā, *Adabiyāt* III, p. 271; Minovi, 1988, p. 368). (20-21) Zerekli (VIII, p. 66) has credited Qoṭb-al-din with the authorship of two books, *Tāj al-olum* and *al-Tabšera*, which are not mentioned in other sources. Qoṭb-al-Din is also credited with the authorship of a book on ethics in Persian, written for Malek 'Ezz-al-Din, the ruler of Shiraz, and a book on astronomy, titled *Ḥall moškelāt al-Majestī*, of none of which an existing manuscript has been reported. He also wrote poetry, but apparently did not leave a *divān* (Minovi, 1988, pp. 352, 363-64).

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