

# TEXTS AND MANUSCRIPTS: DESCRIPTION AND RESEARCH

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## AFDAL AL-DĪN KĀSHĀNĪ AND HIS TREATIES “THE BOOK OF EVERLASTING” (BASED ON THE MS B 2496 FROM THE SPIOS COLLECTION)

The name of Afḍal al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ḥasan Maraḳī Kāshānī is comparatively little known in the Russian as well as European scholarship. Meanwhile, the works of this interesting, original thinker and a wonderful poet, whose *rubā'ī* (often wrongly ascribed to 'Umar Kḥayyām (ca. 439—517/1048—1123)) are well-known in Iran and abroad, are undoubtedly worthy of orientalist's notice.

Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī entered the history of Persian prose as the author of small, but stylistically flawless, capacious and original tractates on various philosophical and

logical questions. He also did several wonderful translations of works by Aristotle and Hermes Trismegistus from Arabic to Persian.

The SPIOS manuscript collection possesses five manuscripts of Kāshānī's works [1]. The present paper aims at presenting one of them — “The Book of Everlasting” (جاودان نامه). I would like to point out that this research is of preliminary character and it does not claim to be a detailed study of the questions, discussed by Kāshānī in his work.

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The data available on Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī's life can hardly be described as exhaustive. Kāshānī's works known to us contain no autobiographical information that could shed light on the details of his life [2]. As for the data given in *tadhkira*, or other biographical or historical sources, they are quite scarce and moreover often doubtful when it comes to their reliability and therefore require careful treatment and examination [3].

Until now among the researchers there is no agreement on the birth and death dates of Kāshānī. Obviously, Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī was born either in 582/1186–7 or in 592/1195–6 and died approximately in 667/1268–9 [4].

According to the data in some earlier sources, Kāshānī was Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī's (597—672/1201—74) uncle [5]. For instance, “The Assembly of the Eloquent” (مجمع الفصحا) contains the following abstract:

بعضی گفته اند خالوی خواجه نصیر الدین طوسی است. و در هر صورت خواجه نصیر الدین با آن فضل و کمال و جاه و جلال که داشته نهایت محبت و اخلاص نیت نسبت بابا افضل مرعی میفرموده و در فتنه هلاکو خان بجهت بابا کاشان را حفظ نموده.

“He is said to be Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī's uncle. At any rate, Nāṣir al-Dīn showed endless love and sincere attachment to Bābā Afḍal for his wisdom, perfection, high rank and magnificence. And during the times of Hulāgū-khān's distemper Kāshān was saved owing to Bābā's efforts” [6].

According to other sources, owing to Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī's efforts and mediation Kāshān escaped the fate of Baghdād looted by Mongol troops in 656/1258. Allegedly, it was done to protect Afḍal al-Dīn from the possible troubles, which could occur if Kāshān were seized by Mongols by force [7].

I do not attempt to assess the given sources from the point of view of the data reliability. A reference should be made to the opinion of J. Rypka, a Czech scholar, who said that any statement of kindred or friendly relationships between Ṭūsī and Kāshānī was not confirmed by any reliable factual evidence and therefore can hardly be seriously considered [8].

What concerns Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī himself, this medieval scholar mentions in his autobiography that in his youth he studied different sciences under Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāsib, who was one of Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī's students:

“Then it happened that one of the students of Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī — may God have mercy on him — came to the region. His name was Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāsib, who had acquired a first-rate knowledge in a variety of philosophical subjects, especially in the art of mathematics; he had previously been a friend and acquaintance of my father. My father suggested that I should learn from him and frequent his company; so I began to study mathematics with him” [9].