



## ABŪ HĀŠEM ʿABDALLĀH

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**ABŪ HĀŠEM ʿABDALLĀH** B. MOḤAMMAD B. ḤANAFĪYA, ʿAlid figure in Shiʿite tradition. About two decades after the Prophet died, leaving the Muslim community without any temporal and spiritual guidance authorized by God, the Shiʿite movement began to take shape. Its supporters held that ʿAlī, the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law, and ʿAlī’s descendants guaranteed the continuance of the seemingly lost prophetic guidance. ʿAlī and his sons came to be looked upon as charismatic leaders of the faithful, who ought to rally round them. ʿAlī, Ḥasan, and Ḥosayn failed, however, in their political activities; Moḥammad b. Ḥanafīya (q.v.), another son and a half-brother of Ḥasan and Ḥosayn, did not take any active interest in the wars which Moḳtār (q.v.) feigned to wage for his sake. Careful scrutiny of the source material proves that toward the end of the first century the Shiʿite movement was no longer guided by the ʿAlids; on the contrary, it was the Shiʿites who used the honorable names of the ʿAlids for their own religious and political purposes. Rival currents of the Shiʿite thought had come into being, and it was only in the second century that some of the descendants of ʿAlī (the Hasanids, the Husainid imams) or other Hashimites (e.g., the ʿAbbasids) tried to make use of the different alignments of the Shiʿite movement.

It is in this political and ideological strife that the figure of Abū Hāšem ʿAbdallāh b. Moḥammad b. Ḥanafīya plays an important part, though he personally never seems to have been involved in this struggle. Almost everything which is related about his life has thus become tinged with ideological implications. The historical sources indicate that Abū Hāšem spent



part of his life in Syria; several Shi'ite groups are said to have considered him as their leader, but there are no details as to the nature of his leadership (Ebn Sa'd [Beirut], V, pp. 240f.; Ebn Qotayba, *Ma'āref*, Cairo, 1960, p. 111). It is related that Abū Hāšem died shortly after a visit he had paid the Omayyad court. Mas'ūdī places his death in the reign of 'Abd-al-Malek (65-86/685-705, *Morūj* VII, p. 404). This date, rather than 98/716-17 given elsewhere, is corroborated by the fact that a certain 'Abdallāh b. Ḥāreṭ b. Nawfal (d. 84/703) is said to have taken part in the funeral ceremonies on Abū Hāšem's death, and by Kotayyer 'Azza, who presupposes in one of his poems that Moḥammad b. Ḥanafiya's son and successor in the leadership of the faithful (i.e., Abū Hāšem, since the other children of Ebn Ḥanafiya are nowhere said to have been considered as leaders by the Shi'ites) did not live to the end of 'Abd-al-Malek's reign (Nagel, *Untersuchungen*, p. 56).

After 100 A.H. the Shi'ite movement again began to flourish, and it was only in this period that Abū Hāšem became important for several Shi'ite groups who considered him as the last rightful holder of the Shi'ite heritage. The leaders of these groups, among them the 'Abbasid Moḥammad b. 'Alī and the 'Alid 'Abdallāh b. Mo'āwīya, founder of a short-lived Hashimite state in Fārs (128/744), claimed to possess Abū Hāšem's testament (*waṣīya*), which could give a legal foundation to their aspiration for power. From the text of the testament used by the 'Abbasid propaganda (Ebn 'Abd Rabbeh, *Eqd*, Cairo, 1940-53, IV, pp. 475ff.), we learn that the year 100 was considered as a decisive turning point, after which the eschatological explanations of these Shi'ite groups were to be fulfilled. Owing to this conception, the date of Abū Hāšem's death and of the composition of his alleged testament was postponed to the time immediately before the end of the first Islamic century. When the 'Abbasids had become unrivalled rulers, they soon gave up the idea of being made legitimate by an 'Alid's testament. Only a few unimportant groups continued for some time to claim to be the heirs of Abū Hāšem (Sa'd b. 'Abdallāh Aš'arī, *Ketāb al-maqālāt wa'l-ferāq*, ed. M. J. Maškūr, Tehran, 1342 Š./1963, pp. 38ff.)

See also: Hāšemīya, [Kaysānīya](#).



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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