



ABŪ ḤĀTEM RĀZĪ

ABŪ ḤĀTEM RĀZĪ, AḤMAD B. ḤAMDĀN AL-VARSENĀNĪ AL-LAYṬĪ, Ismaʿili *dāʿī* (missionary) and author of the 4th/10th century. He was born in Pašāpūya, a district south of Ray, and became deputy to Ġiāṭ, the Ismaʿili *dāʿī* active there. According to Neẓām-al-molk, Abū Ḥātem forced out the successor of Ġiāṭ, Abū Jaʿfar Kabīr (who suffered from attacks of melancholy) and himself became the local Ismaʿili leader. Apparently he succeeded in converting the governor of Ray, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī (307-11/919-24). In 313/925-26 or 314/926-27, when Ray was conquered by the Samanids, who were Sunnites, Abū Ḥātem fled to Daylam, the mountainous region southeast of the Caspian Sea. There he lent support to the Gilite leader Asfār b. Šīrōya in his battle against the Zaydī imams of Ṭabarestān. At first the Daylamite prince Mardāvīj b. Zīār, who subdued Asfār, apparently tolerated Abū Ḥātem's influence; his dispute with the philosopher Abū Bakr Moḥammad b. Zakarīyā' Rāzī is said to have taken place in Mardāvīj's presence. Abū Ḥātem incurred, however, the disfavor of Mardāvīj when his predicted date of the Mahdī's appearance proved wrong. He had to flee and died in 322/933-34 on the way or in exile in Azarbaijan.

According to a late Ismaʿili source, *ʿOyūn al-aḵbār* of Edrīs b. Ḥasan (d. 872/1468), Abū Ḥātem recognized the Fatimids as imams and dedicated his book *Ketāb al-zīna* to their second caliph, Qāʿem (322-34/934-46). This report is doubtful; it is seen from his *Ketāb al-eṣlāḥ* that he considered his own lifetime as an interim (*fatra*), i.e., a time without an imam. Like the Qarmaṭīs of Baḥrayn, he seems not to have accepted the Fatimids as true ʿAlids. (Only with Abū Yaʿqūb Sejestānī did "the Persian school" of Ismaʿilis bend to the Fatimids'



claim.)

Abū Ḥātem's book *al-Jāme'* (on *feqh*), mentioned in the *Fehrest*, is not extant. His voluminous work *Ketāb al-zīna* deals unsystematically with Islamic theological terminology. This work seems to be modeled after the lost *Ketāb al-bayān* of Ġīāṭ. In his *A'lām al-nobūwa* Abū Ḥātem defends the notion of prophethood against the philosopher Abū Bakr Rāzī. *Ketāb al-eṣlāḥ* is the oldest remaining Isma'ili work presenting doctrines of a Neoplatonic sort which developed in "the Persian school" from the beginning of the 4th/10th century. This book, available in several manuscripts, constitutes part of a longer controversy among the Persian Isma'ilis about the proper form of the new doctrine; Abū Ḥātem corrects numerous points in the *Ketāb al-maḥṣūl* of his contemporary and fellow *dā'i* Nasafī. (In his lost *Ketāb al-noṣra* Abū Ya'qūb leveled criticism against *Ketāb al-eṣlāḥ*, and his book was itself criticized by Ḥamīd-al-dīn Kermānī in *Ketāb al-rīāz*.) From the disconnected criticisms made of Nasafī's book, one can reconstruct the basic ideas of Abū Ḥātem's own doctrine, which has not reached us in any systematic presentation. The Intellect (*'aql*) is God's first originated being (*al-mabda' al-awwal*), and from the Intellect the Soul (*nafs*) proceeds through emanation (*enbe'āt*). Beneath the Soul, which, together with the Intellect, builds the sublime world (*al-'ālam al-laṭīf*), the world of gross matter (*al-'ālam al-kaṭīf*) begins. The highest level in this world is occupied by matter and form; these are not emanated from the Soul but rather are mere effects or impressions (*ātār*) produced (*aḏhara*) by it through thought. Following the one creator and his two creations, three kinds of matter are distinguished: The first is purely imagined (*wahmīya*) and consists of the states of the Soul, namely motion and repose; the second comprises the four elementary qualities (*afrād*)—dryness and moistness, warmth and cold; the third consists of elements (*ommahāt*) which are composed of these qualities; as a result of their mingling, the four substances (*ḡawāher*) arise—minerals, plants, animals, and man.

In his psychology Abū Ḥātem maintains, contrary to Nasafī, that human souls are not parts (*ajzā'*) of the Universal Soul, but only effects (*ātār*), which belong completely to this world and hence are imperfect. It is the goal of the Isma'ili teachings to provide individual souls with that perfection (*tamām*) which is characteristic of the Universal Soul by virtue of its essence.

Like other Isma'ili authors, Abū Ḥātem proclaims a cycle of seven enunciating (*nāṭeq*) prophets (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Moḥammad, and the Mahdī). Unlike Nasafī and Sejestānī, he declares that Adam revealed a system



of religious law (*šarī'a*) which later was abrogated by Noah.

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