



‘ALĪ AKBAR ḤOSAYNĪ ARDESTĀNĪ

‘ALĪ AKBAR ḤOSAYNĪ ARDESTĀNĪ, Indo-Muslim *taḍkera* writer, remembered solely for his unpublished *Majma‘ al-awlā‘*, an encyclopedia of Sufi saints compiled in 1043/1633-34 and dedicated to the Mughal emperor Shah Jahān (1037-68/1628-58). Its twelve chapters recount approximately 1,500 lives, beginning with the companions of the Prophet and covering members of the main mystic orders (*salāsel*) and their offshoots; thirty-six of the saints are poets and thirty-eight women. The introduction includes a list of authorities consulted and definitions of Sufi technical terms, such as *walāyat*, *qoṭb*, *ḡawṭ*, and *abdāl*; a conclusion discusses the first four caliphs. ‘Alī Akbar’s list of eighty sources includes earlier works like *Ḥelyat al-awlā‘*, *Ḡonyat al-ṭālebīn*, *Kašf al-maḥjūb*, *Taḍkerat al-awlā‘*, *Foṣūṣ al-ḥekam*, *al-Fotūḥāt al-Makkīya* and near contemporary works like the letters of Aḥmad Serhendī (*Maktūbāt-e emām-e rabbānī*) and the *Akbār al-akyār* of ‘Abd-al-Ḥaqq Moḥaddet Dehlavī; he sometimes borrows almost verbatim from this last work. *Majma‘ al-awlā‘* was the earliest of several important hagiographic works which appeared during the reign of Shah Jahān; along with ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān Češtī’s *Mer’āt al-asrār*, it consolidates the significant hagiographical information of the medieval period.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

On the contents of *Majma' al-awlā'*, see Ethé, *Cat. Ind. Off.* I, pp. 270-74. Storey, I/2, p. 991 .