



AMĪNĀ

AMĪNĀ, pen name (*takalloṣ*) of BENYĀMĪN B. MĪŠĀ'ĪL KĀŠĀNĪ, an outstanding Jewish poet of Iran. According to one of his poems, "Tafsīr-e azhārōt-nāma" (Ben Zvi Institute, Jerusalem, ms. no. 1085), he was born in 1083/1672-73 and was still alive in 1145/1732-33. Our only information about his life is contained in his *Sargodašt-e Amīnā bā hamsareš* (Library of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, mic. no. 19874), where he addresses each of his seven children and complains about his wife after twenty years of marriage. He also composed a "tarjī'-band" satirizing women (Ben Zvi Institute, ms. no. 1044). He lived in Kāšān during the Afghan invasion and composed a poem in praise of Ašraf Afġānī (Ben Zvi Institute, ms. no. 1044). His poems and those of his fellow-citizen and contemporary, Bābā'ī b. Farhād, suggest that the Jews of Kāšān lived in tranquillity during Ašraf's short reign. With the arrival of Nāder-qolī (Nāder Shah Afšār) in pursuit of Ašraf, this tranquillity came to an end and in 1142/ 1729-30 the Jews of Kāšān, including Amīnā, were converted to Islam for a period of seven months (A. Netzer, *Cronika šel Bābā'ī ben Farhād*, Jerusalem, 1977).

A recent study of Judaeo-Persian manuscripts in the libraries of the Hebrew University and the Ben Zvi Institute in Jerusalem, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York, the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and the British Museum in London has shown that Amīnā wrote approximately forty poetic works, which are now scattered among various collections of poetry. His mostly short poems have a variety of meters. His longest works concern Esther and Mordechai (based on the Book of Esther),



the sacrifice of Isaac according to the *midrash* of Yahūdā b. Šamū'el b. 'Abbās (a poet and preacher of 12th century Tunisia and Syria), and *Tafsīr-e azhārōt* or commentary on the “Commandments and Prohibitions” of Shlomo b. Gabirol (the famous poet of 11th century Spain). Each of these works contains 300 to 400 verses. He also composed a poem of 58 verses criticizing the judges of Kāšān, a short poem in mixed Persian and Hebrew, and a 92-verse poem in Hebrew (A. Netzer, “Tahnonīm le-Rabbī Binyāmīn ben Mīšā'el mi-Kāšān,” *Pe'amīm* 2, 1979, pp. 48-54). Concerning some of his work and his *'Aqedat Yizḥaq* (“The sacrifice of Isaac”), see A. Netzer, *Montaqab-e aš'ār-e fārsī az ātār-e Yahūdīān-e Īrān*, Tehran, 1352 Š./1973, pp. 50-51, 351-64.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also W. Bacher, “Judaeo-Persian,” *The Jewish Encyclopaedia* VII, pp. 13-15, 17.