



## ARDABĪLĪ

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**ARDABĪLĪ**, AḤMAD B. MOḤAMMAD, known as MOQADDAS and MOḤAQEQ ARDABĪLĪ, Imamite theologian and jurist of the early Safavid age. As his *nesba* indicates, he probably originated from Ardabīl in Azarbaijan, but nothing is known about his family, date of birth, and early life. He studied theology and philosophy under Jamāl-al-dīn Maḥmūd Šīrāzī, a student and commentator of the Aṣḥ'arite theologian Jalāl-al-dīn Davānī (d. 908/1502-03), most likely in Shiraz. Among his co-students were 'Abdallāh b. Ḥosayn Yazdī (d. 981/1573), who later, at the same time as Ardabīlī, taught in al-Najāf; and the Shafe'ite Aṣḥ'arite theologian Mīrzājān Ḥabīballāh Bāḡnavī Šīrāzī (d. 994/1586), who later went into exile in Bukhara. Ardabīlī studied *feqh* with some students of the Šahīd al-Ṭānī Zayn-al-dīn al-'Āmelī (d.966/1559), especially with Sayyed 'Alī al-Šā'eḡ al-Jazzīnī (d.780/1572). These *feqh* studies were pursued by him evidently after his study of theology and probably in the Jabal 'Āmel, since 'Alī al-Šā'eḡ is not known to have taught elsewhere. Later he lived and taught in al-Najāf until his death in Šafar, 993/February, 1585. In his *Ḥadīqat al-šī'a* he mentions a former stay in Isfahan and a trip to Mecca, presumably for a pilgrimage. He is also reported to have repeatedly visited the shrines of the imams in Karbalā', al-Kāzemayn, and Sāmarrā'. Many edifying and miraculous stories are related about his saintly conduct, which earned him his epithet Moqaddas. He is reported to have regularly been given, at night, the answers to his scholarly questions by a voice from 'Alī's tomb and to have met the Twelfth Imam in the mosque of al-Kūfa. The Safavids Shah Ṭahmāsp and Shah 'Abbās are said to have revered him and to have tried to induce him to come to Iran. However, a story about Shah 'Abbās's attempt to lure him to Isfahan as



imam of the Masjed-e Šāh is clearly anachronistic. Among his students were Sayyed Moḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Abu’l-Ḥosayn al-‘Āmelī and al-Ḥasan b. Zayn-al-dīn al-‘Āmelī (known respectively as *šāḥeb al-madārek* and *šāḥeb al-ma‘ālem*, after their popular *feqh* works), Mollā ‘Abdallāh b. al-Ḥosayn Tostarī, and Sayyed Fayzallāh b. ‘Abd-al-Qāher Tafrešī.

The following works by him are known: (1) *Majma‘ al-fā‘eda wa’l-borhān fī šarḥ eršād al-adhān* (lith. Iran, n.d., and Tehran, 1274/1858), a commentary on the *feqh* compendium *al-Eršād* of ‘Allāma al-Ḥellī, begun in Karbalā’ in Ramažān, 977/February, 1570 and completed on 2 Šafar 985/21 April 1577. Ardabīlī composed it for his son Moḥammad. The section on marriage and some other parts were lost, because they were found unreadable in the author’s original. Shaikh Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī characterizes Ardabīlī on the basis of this *feqh* work as a pure *mojtahed* like al-Ḥellī. However, Ardabīlī appears to have relied less on the principle of *ejmā‘* than had been common before his time and greatly refined the methods of judging and interpreting legal traditions. (2) *Zobdat al-bayān fī barāhīn aḥkām al-Qor’ān* (ed. Tehran n.d., and 1369/1949), a commentary on the *sūras* of the Qur’ān containing legal rules. It was completed before 2 Du’l-ḥejja 986/30 January 1579, the date of a manuscript of it. (3) Two treatises on the land tax (*Resāla karājīya*), in which he supported the position of Ebrāhīm al-Qaṭīfī that government grants of *karāj* land were illegitimate in his time and could not be accepted by the Imamite ‘*olamā*’; this was against the view of ‘Alī b. ‘Abd-al-‘Ālī al-Karakī. They were printed together with *Dorar al-fawā‘ed* of Mortazā al-Anṣārī, Tehran, 1381/1900; in *al-Kalemāt al-rezā‘īyāt wa’l-ḥarājīyāt*, Tehran, 1313-15/1895-97; and in *Kalemāt al-moḥaqqeqīn*, Tehran, 1313-15/1895-97. (4) *Ḥadiqat al-šī‘a*, in Persian. The first part, containing the biography of the Prophet and his ancestors, is apparently not extant. The second part dealing with the imamate and the biographies of the twelve imams has been repeatedly printed in Iran. The authenticity of the work has been questioned by several scholars since the late 11th/17th century and is still subject to dispute. (See in particular the discussion in Ma‘šūm ‘Alī Šāh, *Ṭarā‘eq al-ḥaqā‘eq*, ed. M. J. Maḥjūb, Tehran, 1369/1950, I, pp. 186-88; al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, *Mostadrak al-wasā‘el*, Tehran, 1318-21/1900-03, III, pp. 393-95; *al-Darī‘a* VI, pp. 385-87; M. T. Dānešpažūh, *Fehrest . . . Meškāt* III, pp. 600-05). These doubts have arisen partly because of the popular, unscholarly character of the book, in contrast with Ardabīlī’s other works, and because of the scathing condemnation of Sufi doctrine and practice and of philosophy, while in another work he appears to espouse the Sufi doctrine of *waḥdat al-wojūd*. There exists, moreover, a slightly different



version of the book, sometimes entitled *Kāšef al-ḥaqq*, which was written in Hyderabad in 1058/1648 and dedicated to the Shi'ite ruler Qoṭb Shah. This version does not contain the section denouncing Sufism, and Ardabīlī's references to his own works in the first person are either given in the third person or are missing. This version is attributed to Mo'ezz-al-dīn Ardestānī who is reported to have claimed it as his own original composition. The chapter on Sufism is, on the other hand, also extant in manuscript as a separate work. Though the question may not definitely be settled until a manuscript or a reference to the book earlier than 1058/1648 is found, there are indications that the former version is the original one. The book, in which the practice of cursing the first three caliphs is expressly endorsed, was written late in Ardabīlī's life, as is evident from the references to his other works, and has to be viewed on the background of the renewal of extreme antagonism polarizing supporters of Shi'ism and Sunnism after the death of Shah Ṭahmāsp and the attempt of Shah Esmā'īl II (984-85/1576-77) to restore Sunnism in Iran. Ardabīlī's repudiation of Sufism and philosophy may reflect the aim of dissociating himself from the school of Davānī in Shiraz, which had superficially been converted to Shi'ism at best and to which he had belonged before joining the more strictly Shi'ite school of the Šahīd al-Ṭānī. This purpose is indicated by the fact that his former co-student Mirzājān (Bāḡnavī) Šīrāzī is singled out for sarcastic comment as a "mofti" of the Sufi libertinists. (5) *Oṣūl al-dīn* or *al-'Aqā'ed*, in Persian, also called, after its first chapter, *Resāla fī eṭḥāt al-wāḡeb*, a short exposition of the creed with chapters on the proof of the existence of God, prophecy, the imamate, and the hereafter (*ma'ād*). (6) *Ḥāšīat al-tajrīd le'l-Qūšjī*, a commentary on al-Qūšjī's commentary on the theological part of Našīr-al-dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-'aqa'ed* containing a lengthy chapter on the imamate. It was written for his son Abu'l-Šalāḡ Moḡammad and completed on 13 Rabī' I 986/21 May 1578. (7) *Ḥāšīat šarḡ moḡtašar al-oṣūl al-'Azodī*, a commentary on the section on consensus (*eḡmā'*) of 'Azod-al-dīn al-Ījī's commentary on *Moḡtašaral-oṣūl*, Ebn al-Ḥāḡeb's compendium of legal methodology (*oṣūl al-feqh*). (8) *Al-Naṣṣ al-ǰalī fī emāmāt mawlānā 'Alī*, referred to in *Ḥadīqat al-šī'a*, does not seem to be extant. (9) *Resāla fī'l-eḡtehād wa'l taqlīd* (see M. T. Dānešpažūh, *Fehrest-e Ketāb-kāna-ye Markazī-e Dānešgāh-e Tehrān*, Tehran, 1340 Š./1961, p. 821). (10) *Resāla fī mas'alat al-šarṡ fī zemn al-'aqd* (see Dānešpažūh, loc. cit.). (11) *Resālat al-layl wa'l-nahār*, on the legal rules concerning day and night (see 'Abd al-Ḥosayn Ḥā'eri, *Fehrest-e Ketāb-kāna-ye Maḡles-e Šūrā-ye Mellī IX/1*, Tehran, 1346 Š./1968, p. 152). (12) *Estīnās al-ma'nawīya*, on theology. The authenticity of this work has been questioned.



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