



BĀBĀ KUHI

BĀBĀ KŪHĪ, popular name of Shaikh Abū ‘Abdallāh Moḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Obaydallāh Bākūya Šīrāzī, Sufi of the second half of the 4th/10th and the first quarter of the 5th/11th century, also (more correctly) known as Ebn Bākūya. Despite frequent references to him in Sufi literature, next to nothing is known about his life. He was probably born in Shiraz, where, as a young man, he met the famous mystic Abū ‘Abdallāh Moḥammad b. Kaḥfī (d. 371/982) and the Arab poet Motanabbī (in 354/965). He traveled extensively in search of stories concerning Sufi shaikhs and their sayings. During his travels he met with the leading Sufis of his time including Shaikh Abū Sa‘īd Abi’l-Ḳayr and Abu’l-Qāsem ‘Abd-al-Karīm Qoṣayrī. He was still in Nišāpūr in 426/1035, but he finally returned to Shiraz and retreated to a cave in a mountain (now called Bābā Kūhī) just north of the city, where he soon died and was buried in 428/1037 at a very advanced age. Until very recently, the cave was occupied by an old dervish who was known to the Shirazis as Bābā Kūhī.

The name Bābā Kūhī, apparently a popular corruption of Ebn Bākūya (Bābā Kūhī means old gaffer of the mountains) is first mentioned by the poet Sa‘dī (*Būstān*, chap. 5). Faḥr al-Zamānī (*May-kāna*, pp. 86-88) records a legend according to which the young poet Ḥāfeẓ, an object of ridicule among his fellow citizens for his poor poetry, engaged in a vigil at the tomb of Bābā Kūhī for three nights. On the third night he was visited by Imam ‘Alī, who gave him a heavenly morsel, thereby opening the door of all knowledge to Ḥāfeẓ and endowing him with the gift of poetry. This obviously unfounded story is apparently an awkward attempt, as often is the case with Ḥāfeẓ’s poetry, to



explain a difficult poem.

Of his works a *resāla* on Ḥallāj called *Bedāyat ḥāl al-Ḥallāj wa nehāyatoḥu* (see Sezgin, *GAS* I, p. 652) has survived. Samʿānī mentions also the *Ketāb maqāmāt al-mašāyek* (apud Meier, *Abū Saʿīd*, p. 288). The Persian *Dīvān* attributed to him (Shiraz, 1347/1928, 2nd ed., Shiraz, 1332 Š./1953), as convincingly argued by M. Qazvīnī, must belong to a mediocre poet of a later date (probably 10th/17th century), whose *taḳalloṣ* Kūhī has evidently been the cause of the false attribution.

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Idem, *Yāddāsthā* II, pp. 3-9.

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