



BAYŽĀWĪ, NĀŞER-AL-DĪN

BAYŽĀWĪ, NĀŞER-AL-DĪN ABU'L-KAYR (or ABŪ SA'ĪD) 'ABD-ALLĀH B. 'OMAR B. MOḤAMMAD, Shafe'ite jurist, Ash'arite theologian, and renowned Qur'an commentator. Information about his life is scanty and at times contradictory. He was born at a date unknown in Bayzā north of Shiraz to a family of jurists. His father Emām-al-Dīn (d. 673/1274-75) was *qāzi 'l-qozāt* in Shiraz and, during the reign of the Salghurid Abū Bakr b. Sa'd (623-58/1226-60), also held the post of *qāzi 'l-mamālek* of Fārs province. Bayzāwī studied with his father, as well as with Šaraf-al-Dīn 'Omar b. Zakī Būškānī (d. 680/1281). In about 678/1279 he was appointed by the il-khan Abaqa as *qāzi 'l-mamālek* of Fārs. After Abaqa's death (in 680/1281) he gained the post of *qāzi* of Shiraz. It is not clear how long he held this position; according to some reports he lost it after six months to Majd-al-Dīn Esmā'īl b. Yaḥyā (d. 756/1355) of the influential Fālī (or Bālī) family. During the reign of Arġūn (683-90/1284-91) Bayzāwī was appointed judge of his hometown, allegedly after sending Arġūn a copy of his *Tafsīr*. He later moved to Tabrīz, but once again it is not clear what official position, if any, he held there.

The year of Bayzāwī's death in Tabrīz is variously given as 685/1286, 691/1292, 692/1293, 708/1308-09, some time after 710/1310-11, and 716/1316. R. Sellheim (*Materialien zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte, Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland XVII A 1*, Wiesbaden, 1976, pp. 289-91) and J. van Ess ("Biobibliographische Notizen zur islamischen Theologie," *Welt des Orients* 9, 1978, pp. 261-70) have adduced convincing evidence in support of the later dates. In particular, van Ess cites a letter of the vizier Rašīd-al-Dīn



Faḏl-Allāh to his son Amīr ‘Alī, in which Bayzāwī is mentioned among 51 renowned scholars to whom gifts should be presented. For reasons discussed by van Ess, the letter could not have been written before 702-03/1302-03, and may possibly be as late as the end of 712/1312-13. Two further points are worth mentioning in support of the later date. First, we possess the text of correspondence (*mokātaba*) between Bayzāwī and the celebrated Imami scholar Ebn Moṭahhar Ḥellī (d. 726/1325), in which Bayzāwī comments on a legal point that Ḥellī makes in his *Ketāb qawā’ed al-aḥkām* (‘Abd-Allāh Efendī, *Riāz al-‘olamā’*, Qom, 1401/1980-81, I, pp. 382-93; *A’yān al-šī’a* XXIV, pp. 300-02). The correspondence probably took place after 699/1299-1300, since this is the most likely date for the completion of the *Qawā’ed* (ibid., p. 314). Second, according to a passage in Kḅānsārī’s *Rawzāt al-jannāt* (ed. A. Esmā’īlīān, Qom, 1390-92/1970-72, II, p. 281), the il-khan Öljeytü (Üljäytü, 703-16/1304-16) raised Ḥellī’s position above that of all other scholars in his retinue, among whom are mentioned Bayzāwī and ‘Azod-al-Dīn Ījī (d. 756/1355). This must have occurred after Öljeytü’s adoption of Shi’ism in 710/1310. We can also infer from this passage that for some time at least Bayzāwī lived in Öljeytü’s capital Solṭānīya, vying for a position of influence in the court. There is one item of information which would appear to run counter to a post-710 date. It is that the mystic Qoṭb-al-Dīn Šīrāzī asked to be buried next to Bayzāwī in the Čarandāb cemetery of Tabrīz (Ebn Rāfe’, *Montakāb al-mokṭār*, Baghdad, 1357/1958, pp. 227-28; cf. Ebn Kaṭīr, *al-Bedāya wa’l-nehāya*, Cairo, 1351-58/1932-39, XIII, p. 309; Kḅānsārī, *Rawzāt al-jannāt* VI, p. 47; Bayzāwī’s grave was destroyed by the Safavids some time before 984/1576). The traditional date of Šīrāzī’s death is 710/1310. There is some evidence, however, that he only died in 716/1316 (van Ess, art. cit., p. 268; cf. H. Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, Paris, 1971-72, II, p. 20). Should this be correct, it might then be suggested that Bayzāwī and Šīrāzī both died in 716, within weeks or months of each other.

Bayzāwī’s writings attest to his broad interests and encyclopedic knowledge. The following works have been published: (1) *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-ta’wīl*, Bayzāwī’s famous Qur’ān commentary. It is also known as *Tafsīr al-qāzī* and as *Mokṭaṣar al-kaššāf*. The latter title suggests the extent of Bayzāwī’s indebtedness to Zamaḳšārī’s magnum opus; it is, however, slightly misleading: Rather than abridging Zamaḳšārī’s Mu’tazilite argumentations Bayzāwī on occasion attempts to refute them, and he also relies on other exegetes, such as Rāḡeb Eṣfahānī (d. 502/1108) and Faḅr-al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606/1209). The *Anwār al-tanzīl* seems to have been slow gaining widespread recognition; eventually, however, it eclipsed all of Bayzāwī’s other writings. Its popularity, as reflected



in the numerous supercommentaries written on it, derives from its relative brevity, coupled with a successful combination of grammatical, legal, theological, and historical material. Its fame reached Europe early. In the seventeenth century it was used by (among others) E. Pococke and L. Marracci (C. A. Nallino, “Le fonti arabe manoscritte dell’opera di Ludovico Marracci sul Corano,” *Rendiconti R. Accademia dei Lincei*, set. VI, 7, 1932, pp. 322-23 = *Raccolta di scritti* II, Rome, 1940, p. 109) and, in the eighteenth century, by G. Sale for his English translation of the Qur’ān. It was edited by Heinrich O. Fleischer (2 vols., Leipzig, 1846-48; for a critical assessment of this edition see J. Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa*, Leipzig, 1955, p. 171) and was repeatedly printed in the Muslim world. (2) *Ṭawāle’ al-anwār*, a short compendium of *kalām*, characterized by a strict logical structure and the use of philosophical terminology. This work, particularly with the commentary of Maḥmūd b. ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān Eṣfahānī (d. 749/1348) entitled *Maṭāle’ al-anzār* (Cairo, 1323), exercised considerable influence on the development of later *kalām*. An English translation of the *Maṭāle’* was prepared (E. F. Calverley, *Muslim World* 53, 1963, pp. 293-97) but has apparently remained unpublished. (3) *Menhāj al-woṣūl elā ‘elm al-oṣūl* (Cairo, 1326), a work on *oṣūl al-feqh*, for which Bayẓāwī also composed a commentary (not extant). Bayẓāwī is at times referred to as *Ṣāḥeb al-menhāj* in recognition of this work’s importance. (4) *Al-Ġāya al-qoṣwā fī-derāyat al-fatwā*, an abridgment of *al-Wasīṭ*, Ġazālī’s manual of Shafē’ite law (2 vols., ed. ‘Alī Qaradāġī, Cairo, 1982). (5) *Lobb al-lobāb fī ‘elm al-e’rāb*, an abridgment of the treatise on grammar known as *al-Kāfiya* of ‘Oṭmān b. ‘Omar Ebn Ḥājeb (d. 646/1249). It was published with the commentary of Moḥammad b. Pīr ‘Alī Berkawī (or Bergelī; d. 981/1573) entitled *Emteḥān al-aḍkīā* (Istanbul, 1303). (6) *Nezām al-tawārīk*, a short world history and Bayẓāwī’s only known Persian work. Much of it was written about 674/1275-76; it has a continuation up to the year 694/1294-95 (Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India*, London, 1867-77, II, p. 253), which, however, may not be by Bayẓāwī. The work is already cited in Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfī’s *Tārīk-egozīda* (pp. 8, 811). Doubts concerning its authenticity (Tabrīzī, *Rayḥānat al-adab*, Tehran, 1324-32 Š./1945-54, I, p. 191) appear to be unfounded. The *Nezām* was published with explanatory notes in Urdu by Sayyed Maṣṣūr (Hyderabad, 1930). Works extant only in manuscript include: (1) *Meṣbāḥ al-arwāḥ*, a treatise on theology. (2) *Montaha ‘l-monā*, on the divine names. (3) *Resāla fī mawzū‘āt al-olūm wa ta‘ārīfehā*. (4) *Resālat manāzel al-qamar*, which may have formed part of Bayẓāwī’s lost astronomical work *Mokṭaṣar fī‘l-hay‘a*. (5) *Ṣarḥ maṣābīḥ al-sonna* (also known as *Toḥfat al-abrār*), a commentary on Baġawī’s (d. 510/1117 or 516/1122) famous collection of traditions. The



following works of Bayzāwī are known at present by their titles only: (1) *al-ʿAyn*, a work on *tafsīr*. (2) *Al-Maṭāleʿ*, a work on logic, for which Bayzāwī also composed a commentary. (3) *Meršād al-afhām fī mabādeʿ al-aḥkām*, a commentary on Ebn al-Ḥājeḥ’s work on *oṣūl al-feqh* entitled *Montaha ʿl-soʿūl waʿl-amal fī ʿelm al-oṣūl waʿl-jadal*. (4) *Al-Meṣbāḥ fī oṣūl al-dīn*. This work is possibly identical with (5) *al-Īzāḥ fī oṣūl al-dīn*, as well as with the *Meṣbāḥ al-arwāḥ*. (6) *Šarḥ al-foṣūl*, a commentary on a theological treatise of Naṣīr-al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274). (7) *Šarḥ al-montaḥab fīʿl-oṣūl*, a commentary on Faḵr-al-Dīn Rāzī’s abridgment of his own *Maḥṣūl*. This work may be identical with the *Menhāj*. (8) *Šarḥ al-tanbīh*, said to have comprised four volumes. It is a commentary on the legal textbook *al-Tanbīh* of the Shafeʿite scholar Ebrāhīm b. ʿAlī Šīrāzī, (d. 476/1083). (9) *Tahḏīb al-aḳlāq fīʿl-taṣawwof*. This title attests to Bayzāwī’s interest in mysticism, which he may have acquired from his father. Indeed, during at least one period of his life he is said to have followed a Šūfī shaikh and to have abandoned all worldly pursuits.

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