



BESTĀMĪ, 'ABD-AL-RAḤMĀN

BESTĀMĪ (Bastāmī), 'ABD-AL-RAḤMĀN b. Moḥammad b. 'Alī, al-Ḥanafī, al-Ḥorūfī (d. 858/1454), Ottoman polymath of Khorasanian ancestry. Some recent sources attribute to him a birth in Bestām (Dehḵodā, s.v.; Moḥammad-'Alī Modarres, *Rayḥānat al-ādab*, Tabrīz, n.d., I, p. 267), but it seems certain he was born in Anṭākīa (Antioch). He studied in Cairo and then settled in Bursa, where he remained until the end of his life. His works—all in Arabic—cover a wide range of subjects. Some relate to the classification of the sciences, including *Dorrat al-'olūm wa jawharat al-fonūn* and *al-Fawā'eḥ al-meskīya fi'l-fawāteḥ al-makkīya*. Bestāmī embarked on the latter work in 795/1393, intending to make of it an encyclopedia of all the sciences, divided into one hundred chapters, but he abandoned it in 844/1440 with only thirty chapters complete (*Kašf al-ẓonūn*, Istanbul, cols. 1293-94). According to Brockelmann (*GAL* II, p. 232), Bestāmī dedicated *al-Fawā'eḥ al-meskīya* to Sultan Morād III, but this is impossible for chronological reasons. A second major division of his writings is concerned with *jafr*, the esoteric significance of the letters of the Arabic alphabet; this includes *Kašf asrār al-ḥorūf wa waṣf ma'āni 'l-ẓorūf* and *Šams al-āfāq fi 'elm al-ḥorūf wa'l-awfāq* (*Kašf al-ẓonūn*, col. 1061). The third distinct category of his work is formed by writings on medicine: *al-Dorra al-lāme'a fi'l-adwīa al-šāfīa*, a book consisting of ten chapters on the properties of different drugs (*Kašf al-ẓonūn*, col. 743); *Dorrat al-fonūn fi ro'yat qorrat al-'oyūn* on ophthalmology (*Kašf al-ẓonūn*, col. 742); and *Waṣf al-dawā' fi kašf āfāt al-wabā'*, a book in four chapters on the treatment of cholera (*Kašf al-ẓonūn*, col. 2013). The only work of Bestāmī that has been printed appears to be *Manāhej al-tawassol fi mabāhej al-tarassol*, a work of *adab* containing forty-six anecdotes



(*laṭā’ef*), each with an edifying moral. It was published in Cairo in 1299/1882 in the margins of Ṣalāḥ-al-Dīn Ṣafadī’s *Janān al-jenās*. Finally, Bestāmī has some works of necrology and chronology.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Given in the text. See also Adnan Adıvar, *Osmanlı türklerinde ilim*, Istanbul, 1970, p. 12.

Brockelmann, *GAL* II, pp. 231-32.

“Bistami,” in *İA* II, p. 650.

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