



BORHĀN-AL-DĪN NASAFĪ

BORHĀN-AL-DĪN NASAFĪ, ABU'L-FAŽĀ'EL MOḤAMMAD b. Moḥammad b. Moḥammad b. 'Abd-Allāh (d. 687/1288), Hanafite theologian, logician, and expert on legal points of disagreement (*kelāf*) and dialectic (*jadāl*). According to his pupil Ebn al-Fowaṭī (Şafadī, I, p. 282), he was born around 600/1203, presumably in Nasaf in Transoxania, and came to Baghdad on his pilgrimage to Mecca in 675/1277. He stayed then and taught in Baghdad until his death and was buried under the cupola of the shrine of Abū Ḥanīfa in Kayzorāniya. Nothing is known about his teachers. Among his students in Baghdad was the Imami scholar 'Allāma Ḥellī who received an *ejāza* from him to transmit all his works (Majlesī, *Beḥār al-anwār*, Tehran, 1956-, CVII, pp. 66-67). His fame evidently spread abroad in his later lifetime, for the Syrian traditionist and historian Abu'l-Qāsem Berzālī wrote him from Damascus in 684/1285 in order to obtain his handwritten *ejāza* from Baghdad. Ebn al-Fowaṭī describes him as leading an ascetic life.

Borhān-al-Dīn's main contribution to scholarship was in the field of *jadāl*, a discipline dealing with the logical aspects of disputed legal doctrine which had been put on a new basis by the school of Rażī-al-Dīn Nīšābūrī, especially Rokn-al-Dīn 'Amīdī (d. 615/1218 in Bukhara). His concise *Moqaddema fī'l-jadāl wa'l-ḳelāf wa'l-naẓar*, also known as *al-Moqaddema al-borhāniya* or *al-Foṣūl al-borhāniya*, became, despite its obscurity, a popular scholastic text memorized by students. At least four commentaries are known to have been written on it in addition to that of the author. The best one of these was, according to Ḥājī Ḳalīfa (col. 1803) by Šams-al-Dīn Samarqandī, completed in Mārdīn in



690/1291. Extant is the commentary by an otherwise unknown No‘mān K̄vārazmī. His other extant treatises on *kelāf* and *jadal* are *Manša’ al-naẓar fī ‘elm al-ḳelāf* (to which the author and Akmal-al-Dīn Bābartī [d. 786/1384] composed commentaries), *Daf’ al-noṣuṣ wa’l-noqūz*, *al-Tarājīḥ*, *Ta’ārozāt* (or *al-Moḳtaṣar fī’l-tarājīḥ*), and *al-Qawādeḥ al-jadalīya*. In the latter treatise he claimed to have proved the faultiness of most of the points made by the later experts of *jadal*. Ebn Ḳaldūn rather names him as one of the scholars who followed closely in the footsteps of ‘Amīdī (*Moqaddema*, ed. E. Quatremère, Paris, 1858-68, III, p. 26). The extent of the originality of his discussions cannot be assessed before they have been systematically compared with earlier *jadal* literature. In practice his interest in points of difference in law was confined to the schools of Abū Ḥanīfa and Šāfe‘ī.

Borhān-al-Dīn’s philosophical works, a commentary on Ebn Sīnā’s *Ketāb al-eṣārāt* and a *Resāla fī’l-dawr wa’l-tasalsol*, are lost. From his other works it appears that his attitude to *falsafa* was, like Ġazālī’s, generally negative except in respect to logic. In spite of his adherence to the Hanafite school of law, he clearly inclined to Ash‘arism in theology and was an admirer of Ġazālī and Faḳr-al-Dīn Rāzī. He wrote a lost commentary on Ġazālī’s *al-Resāla al-qodsīya*, entitled *Sarḥ al-resāla al-qodsīya be-adellatehā al-borhānīya* and abridgments of his *al-Maqṣed al-aqṣā(al-asnā) fī asmā’ Allāh al-ḥosnā* (see R. Mach, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts (Yahuda Section) in the Garrett Collection*, Princeton, 1977, p. 208) and of Rāzī’s large Qur’ān commentary. In his extant *Šarḥ al-asmā’ al-ḥosnā*, a theological discussion of the attributes and Koranic names of God, he names Ġazālī’s *al-Maqṣad al-aqṣā* and Rāzī’s *Lawāme’ al-bayyenāt* as his main sources of inspiration. His positive attitude to Sufism is reflected by quotations of Jonayd and a defense of the orthodoxy of Ḥosayn b. Manšūr Ḥallāj. Apparently lost is his *Maṭla’ al-sa’āda*.

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(Wilferd Madelung)