



EBN AL-EKŞĪD, ABŪ BAKR AḤMAD

EBN AL-EKŞĪD, ABŪ BAKR AḤMAD b. ‘Alī b. Beğçor (270-326/884-938), Mu‘tazilite theologian. According to Kaṭīb Bağdādī (IV, p. 309), he was of Turkish descent, which appears to be confirmed by the “name” (in fact a title) of his grandfather, if read as such. His surname, Ebn al-Ekşīd (also read Ekşīd, Ekşād, or Ekşād) probably indicates that he was descended from a princely family of Sogdia or *Farğāna* (see also [EKŞĪD](#)). According to Ebn Ḥazm (IV, p. 203), his father “was one of the chiefs (*qowwād*) of the *farāgena* and had been governor of the frontier areas (*wālī al-toğūr*) in the caliphates of al-Mo‘tazed and al-Moktafi.” Ebn al-Nadīm added that he lived in Baghdad on a street called Darb-al-Ekşād, which suggests that his family had been established there for several generations, and that he had a country estate (*žay‘a*) managed by a steward (ed. Tajaddod, p. 220). He, therefore, belonged to the class of notables. It appears that he lived most of the time in the ‘Abbasid capital; in particular, he was on hand for the debate between Abū Sa‘īd Sīrāfi and Mattā b. Yūnos organized by the vizier Ebn al-Forāt (Abū Ḥayyān Tawḥīdī, I, p. 108, where the date should be read 320, rather than 326, cf. Yāqūt, *Odabā’* III, p. 106). However, he also lived for a while in Egypt (Yāqūt, *Odabā’* VI, p. 73).

Ebn al-Ekşīd studied *kalām* with Moḥammad b. ‘Omar Şaymarī (d. 315/927), himself a follower of Abū ‘Alī Jobbā‘ī, after having first followed Abu’l-Ḥosayn Kayyāṭ and Abu’l-Qāsem Balkī of the “Baghdad school” (‘Abd-al-Jabbār, 1974, pp. 308-09; Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajaddod, p. 219). Like Şaymarī, he violently



opposed the ideas of Jobbā'ī's son Abū Hāšem, to the point of becoming the head of what amounted to an Ekşīdiya "school" rivaling the Bahşamiya "school." Among his disciples were Abū 'Emrān Mūsā b. Rabāḥ, Abū Ḥafş Meşrī (himself the master of Abū 'Abd-Allāh Ḥabaşī and Abu'l-'Alā' Māzenī), and the celebrated lexicographer and theologian 'Alī b. 'Īsā Rommānī, also called Ekşīdī (Yāqūt, *Odabā'* V, p. 280).

Apparently none of Ebn al-Ekşīd's writings has survived. His principal work on theology seems to have been the *Ketāb al-ma'ūna fi'l-oşul* (Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajaddod, p. 221), on which Rommānī provided a commentary (Sezgin, *GAS* VIII, p. 113); it included, among other material, a refutation of Christian views ('Abd-al-Jabbār, 1966, pp. 148, 198). It seems that he also wrote (perhaps as part of the same work) a history of the Mu'tazilite school (cf. Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajaddod, pp. 113, 201, 214; Yāqūt, *Odabā'* VI, p. 57; Ebn al-Mortażā, p. 70). Although his name does not figure in the *Ṭabaqāt al-mofasserīn* of Dāwūdī and although Ebn al-Nadīm attributed to him only the *Ketāb naẓm* (or *naql*) *al-Qor'ān* (ed. Tajaddod, pp. 41, 221), Ebn al-Ekşīd must also have written a commentary on the Qur'ān, for he was cited more than forty times in the *Tebyān* of Abū Ja'far Moḥammad Ṭūsī, including several instances involving extremely precise points of interpretation. He is said also to have written a digest of Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* (Ebn al-Nadīm, ed. Tajaddod, pp. 221, 292).

Ebn al-Ekşīd was also an eminent jurist and, according to Ebn al-Nadīm (ed. Tajaddod, p. 220), the author of several treatises on *feqh*. It is doubtful, however, that he had been a Shafī'ite, as Ebn Ḥajar erroneously reported (I, p. 231) after Ebn Ḥazm, for Sobkī did not cite him at all.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to know exactly what Ebn al-Ekşīd's positions on *kalām* were, apart from his fierce opposition to the views of Abū Hāšem. On the one hand, it seems that, like Şaymarī, he wished to remain faithful on certain points to the ideas of Abū 'Alī Jobbā'ī, including even those that Jobbā'ī eventually abandoned under the influence of his son (cf. Ebn Mattawayh, 1975, pp. 76, 231); according to 'Abd-al-Jabbār (1974, p. 331; corrected by Joşamī), Abū 'Alī was cited abundantly in the *Ketāb al-ma'ūna*. On the other hand, many positions that were attributed to him, particularly in Ṭūsī's *Tebyān*, were in contradiction to those of Jobbā'ī and in agreement with those of Abu'l-Qāsem Balkī. Examples include the argument that man has "two terms" (*ajalān*; see Ṭūsī on Qur'ān 3:145, 7:34), interpretation of the divine *hedāya* (see Ṭūsī on Qur'ān 2:213, 2:272), explanation of miraculous events as the announcement (*erhāş*) of future prophecy (see Ṭūsī on Qur'ān 3:42, 3:46,



19:30), and the distinction between *hekāya* and *maḥkī* in connection with the word of God (Ebn Mattawayh, 1975, p. 417). The idea that God may accept the prayer of an unbeliever if some utility (*maṣlaḥa*) to mankind is likely to result (see Ṭūsī on Qur’ān 2:186, 7:14-15, 10:89, 15:38) seems also to conform to “Baghdadī” views. Perhaps the Mu’tazilism of Ebn al-Ekšīd represented a sort of highly eclectic synthesis between a particular “Basran” tradition and the diverse positions characteristic of the so-called “school of Baghdad.”

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