



EBN 'ARABŠĀH, ŠEHĀB-AL-DĪN ABU'L-'ABBĀS AḤMAD

EBN 'ARABŠĀH, ŠEHĀB-AL-DĪN ABU'L-'ABBĀS AḤMAD b. Moḥammad ... Ḥanafī 'Ajamī (b. Damascus, 791/1389, d. Cairo, 854/1450), literary scholar and biographer of Tamerlane (Tīmūr). According to the autobiography quoted by Ebn Taḡrīberdī, when Tīmūr conquered Damascus in 803/1401, Ebn 'Arabšāh and his family were transported to Tīmūr's capital, Samarkand. He spent the next eight years in Transoxiana and Chinese Turkestan, where he learned Persian and Mongolian and studied with Sayyed Šarīf Moḥammad Jorjānī, Sa'd-al-Dīn Mas'ūd Taftāzānī, and Šams-al-Dīn Moḥammad Jazarī. Later, in Ḳvārazm, Sarāy, Astrakhan, and the Crimea, he associated with the ruling elite, scholars, and litterateurs. Around 815/1412, he entered the service of the Ottoman sultan Moḥammad I, holding the office of confidential secretary (*kāteb al-serr*). At this time, he translated several religious works from Arabic into Turkish and 'Awfī's *Jāme' al-ḥekāyāt wa lāme' al-rewāyāt* from Persian into Turkish. Ebn 'Arabšāh returned to Syria and reentered Damascus in 825/1422 after the death of Moḥammad I. There he occupied several minor religious posts and completed his celebrated biography of Tīmūr, *'Ajā'eb al-maqdūr fī nawā'eb Tīmūr*. Sometime after 841/1438, he settled in Cairo, where he became acquainted with the historians Ebn Taḡrīberdī and Saḳāwī (Saḳāwī, II, pp. 128-29, 130-31). He initially secured the favor of the Mamlūk sultan Jaqmaq and composed several works in his name, including an adaptation of the *Marzbān-nāma* entitled *Fākehat al-ḳolafā' wa mofākahat al-ḳorafā'*, written in 852/1448. In 854/1450, Jaqmaq imprisoned him for a few days as the result of a



rival's complaint. Ebn 'Arabšāh died twelve years after his release.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(For cited works not given in detail, see "Short References.")

For his life, see the notices in Ebn Taġrīberdī, *al-Manhal al-šāfi wa' l-mostawfi ba'd al-wāfi* II, ed. M. M. Amīn, Cairo, 1984-90, pp. 131-45, and 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Saḳāwī, *al-Žaw' al-lāme' le ahl al-qarn al-tāse'* II, Cairo, 1353-55/1934-36, pp. 126-31, from which other accounts are derived. Secondary accounts include: Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia* III, pp. 181, 183, 185, 197 n., 198, 203, 321 n., 355-56; Ī. Kafesoġlu, *ĪA* II, pp. 698-701; J. Pedersen, *EI2* III, pp. 711-12; and *DMBE* IV, pp. 221-23.

For his works, see *Kašf al-zonūn*, ed. Flügel, II, pp. 128, 352, 510; IV, pp. 190-91, 345; VI, p. 544; and Brockelmann, *GAL* II, pp. 28-30; SII, p. 25. Published texts include: *'Ajā'eb al-maqdūr fi nawā'eb (or akhbār) Tīmūr* (ed. most recently by 'A. M. 'Omar, Cairo, 1979, and A. F. al-Ḥemsī, Beirut, 1986; *Fākehat al-kolafā'wa mafākahat al-zorafā'*, ed. G. W. Freytag, *Fructus imperatorum et jociatio ingeniosorum ...*, 2 vols., Bonn, 1832-52; and *al-Ta'lif al-ṭāher fi šīam Šayk al-Malek al-Žāher al-qā'em be noṣrat al-ḥaqq Abī Sa'īd Jaqmaq*, partially ed. S.A. Strong, *JRAS*, 1907, pp. 395-96; Arabic text, pp. 1-27.