



EBN ŠAHRĀŠŪB, ABŪ JA'FAR ZAYN-AL-DĪN MOḤAMMAD

EBN ŠAHRĀŠŪB, ABŪ JA'FAR (or Abū 'Abd-Allāh) ZAYN-AL-DĪN (or 'Ezz-al-Dīn, Rašīd-al-Dīn) MOḤAMMAD b. 'Alī b. Šahrāšūb b. Abī Našr b. Abī'l-Jayš (b. Sārī, Māzandarān; d. Aleppo, 22 Ša'bān 588/2 September 1192), the most illustrious Imami scholar of the 12th century. He was also called, though rarely, Ebn Kīā-Kay from the Persian name of his ancestor Abū Našr, (not his grandfather Šahrāšūb, pace Scarcia Amoretti) meaning "great sovereign" (Āqā Bozorg, n.d., p. 4, citing Ebn Edrīs Ḥellī). Ebn Šahrāšūb left Saljuq Persia, apparently driven by religious motives, and after several journeys settled in Aleppo, which, since the Hamdanid period, had become one of the great intellectual centers of Shi'ism. It was there and in Iraq in particular that he became celebrated as an Imami theologian, jurist, apologist, and preacher. He died in Aleppo at the age of nearly 100 years and was buried near the city on Jabal al-Jawšan, in the vicinity of the *mašhad* of Moḥsen, son of the third Imam, Ḥosayn b. 'Alī. He is mentioned by authors of later biobibliographical dictionaries as a fine scholar and man of virtue. They refer to his physical beauty, his impressive demeanor, and especially the eloquence and effectiveness of his sermons. He was praised almost as much by the authors of different types of Sunni *ṭabaqāt* (Dahabī, I, p. 413; Ebn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī, V, p. 301; Soyūṭī, I, p. 241). This reverence no doubt resulted from his moderate attitudes; his Shi'ite convictions rarely went beyond expressing love for the [Ahl-al-Bayt](#) and defending a "rationalist" and conciliatory imamism, opinions generally shared by Sunnis. In fact, he seems to have been characterized by a



certain willingness to reduce doctrinal differences between Shi'ites and Sunnis; from a very young age he followed the teachings of such illustrious Sunnis as Abū Ḥāmed Ġazālī (d. 505/1111), Jār-Allāh Zamaḡsarī (d. 538/1144), and the latter's student Kaṭīb (or Akṭab) K̄vārazmī (d. 568/1172; *Aḡyān al-š'ā* VI, p. 28; Modarres, VIII, p. 58; Tafrešī, p. 323). In his writings, particularly the *Manāqeb āl Abī Ṭāleb*, he did not hesitate to cite such Sunni authorities as Ebn Baṭṭa 'Okbarī (d. 387/997) and Ebn Mardawayh (Mardūya) Eṣfahānī (d. 410/1020), and also very frequently to cite contemporaries such as Abu'l-Faḡl Ošnohī (d. ca. 550/1155), Abu'l-Faḡh Naṭanzī (d. ca. 550/1155), and Abu'l-'Alā' Hamaḡdānī (d. 569/1173), when they agreed with his own convictions (Ebn Šahrāšūb, *Manāqeb*, Najaf, I, pp. 32 ff.). Besides, the fact that he had received a robe of honor (*kel'a*), as well as his *laqab* Rašid-al-Dīn, from the 'Abbasid caliph al-Moḡtafī (530-55/1136-60), who was impressed by his sermons, shows clearly that at the very least those sermons in no way contradicted the opinions of Baghdad authorities (Ḍahabī, I, p. 413; Ḥorr 'Āmelī, IV, p. 14; Qomī, I, p. 328).

Among his numerous Shi'ite masters, whom he listed at the beginning of the fifth chapter of the *Manāqeb*, were the two Ṭabresīs (Ṭabarsīs), Abū Maṣšūr and Abū 'Alī, respectively authors of *Eḡtejāj* and *Majma' al-bayān*, as well as the celebrated Persian commentator on the Qur'ān Abu'l-Fotūḡ Rāzī (*Manāqeb*, Najaf, I, pp. 189-90). But the man whom he considered his master par excellence and to whom he was linked by the teaching of his father and, especially, of his grandfather, was the Šayḡ-al-Ṭā'efa Abū Ja'far Moḡammad (not Našīr-al-Dīn, pace Scarcia Amoretti) Ṭūsī (d. 460/1068). Among Ebn Šahrāšūb's disciples were some of the most illustrious Imami scholars of the 13th century, such as Tāj-al-Dīn Ḥasan Darbī, Najīb-al-Dīn Moḡammad Sūrāwī, and Ebn Zohra Ḥalabī (Ebn al-Fowaṭī, IV/1, no. 443; Soyūṭī, I, p. 242; Modarres, VIII, pp. 59-60).

Seventeen titles of works by Ebn Šahrāšūb are known, all written in Arabic. The author himself mentioned twelve of them in his *Ma'ālem al-'olamā'* (ed. 1934, p. 106; ed. 1961, p. 119). The first is the *Manāqeb āl Abī Ṭāleb*, a doctrinal work, apologetic in nature, which was very widely used by later Imami authors; according to *al-Darī'a* (XXII, pp. 318-19), the final part of the work, dealing with the Maḡdī, is missing in every accessible version, including the manuscript dating from 777/1375-76. *Al-Malāḡhem wa'l-fetan* by Ebn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1266) is apparently the only source in which excerpts of the missing portion have been preserved (Kohlberg, p. 251, no. 357). The *Manāqeb* has been published in several editions, the two best being those of M. Borūjerdī (2



vols., Tehran, 1316-17/1898-99) and a group of Imami scholars (3 vols., Najaf, 1375-76 /1956).

A second work is the *Ma'ālem al-'olamā'*, a recapitulation of the *Rejāl* of Najāšī and especially the *Fehrest* of Abū Ja'far Ṭūsī, with 300 additional notices. The especially interesting chapter on Shi'ite poets was compiled, according to 'Abbās Eqbāl, between 573/1177 and 581/1186 and added to the rest of the volume later. The best editions are those of Eqbāl (Tehran, 1352-53/1934) and scholars at Najaf (1380/1961).

According to the author himself, he wrote the *Motašābeh al-Qor'ān* (2 vols., Tehran, 1369/1949, with the marginal notes of Shaikh Ḥasan Moṣṭafawī) to complete his *al-Asbāb wa'l-nozūl*, now lost.

The *Maṭāleb al-nawāṣeb* is a doctrinal discussion in which the author violently attacks the “enemies of the *Ahl-al-Bayt*” without, however, designating them by name; it is still unpublished (to the list of manuscripts given in *al-Darī'a* XIX, p. 76, should be added the manuscript in the Nāṣerīya Library, Lucknow).

The other eight works in the author's list appear to have been lost: *al-Asbāb wa'l-nozūl 'alā maḍhab āl al-Rasūl*, *al-Makzūn al maknūn fī 'oyūn al-fonūn*, *al-Ṭarā'eq fī'l-ḥodūd wa'l-ḥaqā'eq* (also called *A'lām al-ṭarā'eq . . .*, *al-A'lām wa'l ṭarā'eq*), *Mā'edat al-fā'eda* (or *Mā'edat al 'ā'eda*), *al-Meṭāl fī'l-amṭāl*, *al-Ḥāwī* (or *al-Ḥāwī le'l-fatāwī*), *al-Awsāf*, and *al-Menhāj*. The following five titles have been cited by biographers of Ebn Šahrāšūb: *al-Arba'ūn fī manāqeb sayyedat al-nesā' Fāṭemat al-Zahrā'*, *Bayān al-tanzīl* (one of the sources for Majlesī's *Behār al-anwār*; cf. Sbath, p. 11, no. 205), *Ansāb āl Abī Ṭāleb*, *Šarḥ foṣūl kamsīn Ebn Ma'attā* (a work devoted to grammar; Modarres, VIII, p. 59), and *al-Enṣāf*.

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