



EŞFAHĀNĪ, ABU'L-ŞAYĶ ABŪ MOĤAMMAD 'ABD-ALLĀH

EŞFAHĀNĪ, ABU'L-ŞAYĶ ABŪ MOĤAMMAD 'ABD-ALLĀH b. MoĤammad b. Ja'far b. Ḥayyān ḤĀFEZ ANŞĀRĪ (274-369/887-979), traditionist and Qur'ān commentator, important principally for his *Ṭabaqāt al-moĥaddetīn*. Probably he received the *laqab* Abu'l-ŞayĶ because of the great age (95 or 96) to which he lived.

He was born into a learned family of Isfahan and began to hear tradition in his father's circle from a very early age (Ḍahabī, *Sīar*, p. 277). Isfahan being then a center of traditionists, it was only at the age of about twenty-six that he felt the need to travel to hear others. He went to Mosul, Ḥawrān, Ḥejāz, and Iraq.

A Sunnite traditionist, he took no discernible position in *feqh* between the Shafī'ite and Hanafite schools, which were then competing bitterly in Isfahan. As an expert in *esnāds* he was critical, but perhaps too inclusive, in what he himself related. Ḍahabī (*Sīar*, p. 279) criticized him for filling his books with trivia (*wāḥiyāt*). Balūšī, who lists fifty-one titles attributed to him, notes some surprising omissions from his biographies of men who came to Isfahan (*Ṭabaqāt* I, introd. pp. 97-105, 123-24). Sezgin (*GAS* I, pp. 200-201) lists nine titles which exist at least in part.

The *Ṭabaqāt* is valuable not only for its biographical notices, but also for the early information it gives on the history of Isfahan. Abu'l ŞayĶ's disciple Abū



No'aym Eşfahānī used it extensively in his *Akbār Eşbahān*. After a preface describing Isfahan, its geography, the history up to the Islamic conquest, the *Ṭabaqāt* speaks of 690 transmitters who had come to Isfahan, arranged in eleven categories, from the time of the Companions to Abu'l-Şayk's own generation. His *Tafsīr*, now lost, is frequently quoted in Soyūṭī's *al-Dorr al-mantūr*. He also wrote on *feqh* questions, but these works have not survived. His *Ketāb al-'azama*, partly surviving in manuscript, is a mystical work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(for cited works not given in detail, see "Short References"):

Abu'l-Şayk al-Eşfahānī, *Ṭabaqāt al-moḥaddeṭīn be-Eşbahān wa'l-wāredīn 'alayhā*, ed. 'A. 'A. H. Balūšī, 4 vols., Beirut, 1987-92.

Idem, *Ketāb aklāq al-nabī*, Cairo, 1378/1959, repr. 1392/1971.

Idem, *Ketāb al-amṭāl*, ed. E. Y. 'Ersān, M.A. thesis, University of Rīāz, 1403/1983.

Abū No'aym Eşbahānī, *Akbār Eşbahān*, ed. S. Dederling, 2 vols., Leiden, 1931-34, II, p. 90.

Ebn Taḡrīberdī, *al-Nojūm al-zāhera*, 12 vols, Cairo, 1929-56, IV, p. 136.

Esmā'īl Pasha Baḡdādī, *Hadīyat al-'ārefīn*, ed. K. R. Bilge and I. M. Kemal Inal, 2 vols., Istanbul, 1951-55, repr. Tabrīz, 1387/1967, I, p. 447.

Kaṭīb Baḡdādī, *al-Kefāya fī 'elm al-rewāya*, Hyderabad, 1357/1937, p. 313.

Brockelmann, *GAL*, S. 1, p. 347.

Moḥammad b. Aḡmad Ḍahabī, *Tadkerat al-ḥoffāz*, 4 vols., Hyderabad, 1955-58, III, pp. 945-47.

Idem, *al-'Ebarfī akbār al başar*, ed. Ş. Monajjed and F. Sayyed, 5 vols., Kuwait, 1960-66, II, pp. 351-52.



Idem, *Sīar a'lām al-nobalā'*, ed. B. 'A. Ma'rūf and H. Sarḥān, 25 vols., Beirut, 1981-88, XVI, pp. 276-80.

Šams-al-Dīn Moḥammad b. 'Alī Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mofasserīn*, ed. 'A. Aḥmad 'Omar, 2 vols., Cairo, 1392/1972, I, pp. 240-41.

Ebn al-'Emād, *Šaḍarāt al-dahabfi aḵbār man dahab*, ed. H.ṛ Qodsī, 4 vols., 1350-51/1931-32, Cairo, III, p. 69.

Sam'ānī, ed. Yamānī, IV, p. 322.