

5.2 *Al-Ūshī, Qaṣīdat Bad' al-amālī*Ūshī
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5.2.1 Author

Sirāj al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Alī b. ‘Uthmān b. Muḥammad *al-Ūshī* al-Farghānī al-Ḥanafī, Imām al-ḥaramayn, a scholar and poet originating from the Farghāna valley in Central Asia, lived in the sixth/twelfth century and may have died in 575/1179 (GAL 1,552-3 S 1,764; Özverli, in TDVİA 11,73; Kaḥḥāla 7,149; Zirikli 4,310: “after 569”). Unfortunately, virtually nothing is known about the author’s life. However, on the basis of his names and the titles associated with the *shuhra*, it can be inferred that al-Ūshī, the name by which he is generally known, performed the pilgrimage to Mecca and thus left Ūsh or Osh, the town of his ancestors. (This is now a predominantly Uzbek town in the republic of Kyrgyzstan bordering on the Chinese region officially called Xinjiang, i.e. “New Frontier”, and which some Uyghurs also call “Eastern Turkistan”). On the Central Arabian peninsula, in the Ḥijāz, al-Ūshī acquired the honorific title “Imām of the two holy sites”, i.e. of Mecca and Medina, and he obtained lasting fame as the author of a poem on *kalām* which he had already written before he set out on the *hajj*, whence he was referred to as the *Ṣāḥib Yaḡūlu al-‘abd*. However, he also composed other works whose titles are listed in the bibliographical works of Ḥājji Khalifa, in GAL and elsewhere, as follows:

1. *K. Ghurar al-akḥbār wa-durar al-ash‘ār*, a thousand short traditions of which an abridgment (*mukhtaṣar*) in one hundred chapters has been made by the author himself entitled *Niṣāb al-akḥbār li-tafakkur al-akhyār* (ḤKh no. 13797) or *Niṣāb al-akḥbār wa-tadhkirat al-akhyār* (Mss. of the *Niṣāb* are Munich [Aumer] no. 126; Ahlwardt no. 1300-1301; Rosen no. 57 = St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies, B 963; Chalidov, *Rukopisi*, a Ms. acquired 1812 in Kazan, capital of modern Tatarstan) or *Mashāriq al-anwār fi Sharḥ niṣāb al-akḥbār li-tadhkirat al-akhyār* (Kaḥḥāla 7,149). ḤKh lists the sources from which al-Ūshī derived the material for his work and gives a number of sigla (abbreviations) employed by the author, e.g. *alif* for a text entitled *al-Iqnā‘*, *tā’* for *al-Tanbīh*, etc.
2. *Nūr al-Sirāj* (GAL S 1,765, n).
3. *al-Fatāwā al-Sirājiyya*, a collection of legal rejoinders, the title of which includes a reference to the author’s name, Sirāj al-Dīn. The fatwās issued according to the Ḥanafī school of law were completed in 569/1173, thus providing us with a date, placing the author in the sixth/twelfth century. ḤKh 4,358 gives this date on the authority of al-Mawlā Ibn al-Jawī who claims to have

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read, in the author’s colophon at the end of a copy of the *Fatāwā*, that ‘Alī b. ‘Uthmān b. Muḥammad al-Taymī (sic!) completed the composition of the *responsa* in Ūsh, on a Monday in the month of Muḥarram in 569/August-September 1173. ḤKh derived this information from a biographical notice by a certain Taḡī al-Dīn devoted to the *Ṣāḥib yaḡūlu l-‘abd*. In his *Kashf*, 6,229, ḤKh left a blank space after the word *al-mutawaffā* (he died [in]), under the lemma *Niṣāb al-akḥbār*. ḤKh also mentions that Yūsuf b. Abī Sa‘īd Aḥmad al-Sijistānī who, in his own *Munyat al-muftī fi furū‘ al-Ḥanafīyya* (loc. cit.; also *Kashf* 4,358), used the *Fatāwā* of al-Ūshī as one of his sources; he appreciated the latter because of the rare cases (*nawādir waḡā‘i*) it is said to have contained by contradistinction to other similar works.

4. *Qaṣīdat Bad' al-amālī*, the best-known of his works (see below).
5. Kaḥḥāla additionally ascribes a commentary to al-Ūshī which he is said to have written in explanation of a poetical work written by the theologian Najm al-Dīn ‘Umar b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142; GAL 1,548-50), *Sharḥ Manẓūmat ‘Umar al-Nasafī fi al-khilāf*, entitled *Mukhtalif al-riwāya*.

5.2.2 *Qaṣīdat Bad' al-amālī*

The *Qaṣīdat Bad' al-amālī* or *al-Qaṣīda al-lāmiyya fi l-kalām*, to mention but two variant titles, is a didactic poem ending with the letter *lām* in the Wāfir metre, and is a profession of God’s unity in accordance with the Māturidī madh-hab of Sunnī Islam. Ḥājji Khalifa, *Kashf* 4,558-9, who reproduces both the first and final lines of the *Qaṣīda*, mentions that the poem has 66 verses and states that it had been widely received (*maqḡūla mutadāwala*), a fact confirmed by the presence of manuscript copies even in West Africa (*infra*). On the authority of the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafīyya* by a certain al-Tamīmī, Ḥājji Khalifa, loc. cit., reports that the poem was completed in 569/1173, i.e. the same year in which al-Ūshī wrote his *Fatāwā*. Ḥājji Khalifa ends his entry on the *Qaṣīda* by listing a number of commentaries written in explanation of it (*Kashf* 4,559-561).

The text has been ascribed to various authors but the alternative *ascriptions* have been rejected,¹⁴⁹ with most scholars agreeing that the poem was authored

¹⁴⁹ The poem had been attributed to the Zangid ruler al-Malik al-‘Adil Nūr al-Dīn b. ‘Imād al-Dīn (reg. 1146-74), according to an account given in Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Bughayogho (Busse vocalizes: Bughaybagh; cf. Nābulusī 1971, 53) al-Wangarī’s commentary on al-Ūshī. - It may be surmised that the attribution of the *Qaṣīda* to Nūr al-Dīn Zangī, who restored the rule of Sunnī Islam over hitherto Shiīte Egypt, may have been one of the reasons for its enormous popularity.