



BOSTĪ, ABU'L-FATH

BOSTĪ, ABU'L-FATH NEZĀM-AL-DĪN 'AMĪD 'ALĪ b. Moḥammad b. Ḥosayn b. Yūsuf Kāteb, a notable bilingual secretary and poet of the 4th/10th century. (His full name, according to Yāqūt, I, p. 612, was Abu'l-Fath 'Alī b. Moḥammad [or Aḥmad] b. Ḥosayn b. Moḥammad b. 'Abd-al-'Azīz.) He was born in Bost, Sīstān, where he received his education in literary studies (*adab*), jurisprudence (*feqh*), and Hadith. His teacher in Hadith was Abū Ḥātem Moḥammad b. Ḥabbān, who lived in Bost from 340/951 until his death in 354/965. Bostī was one of the most famous followers of the Shafe'ite school (Sobkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-šāfe'īya*). Jorfādaqānī (p. 393) attributes to him two lines of a poem in Arabic which shows Bostī as a follower of the Hanafite school of jurisprudence (*feqh*), but in *oṣūl* as adhering to the Karrāmī sect. This is, however, quite doubtful as it is contradicted by other sources which refer to him as a Shafe'ite (e.g., Ḥājī Kālifā, I, col. 772, II, col. 1626; Esmā'īl Pasha, I, col. 685). His main enduring fame is as a master of letter writing and as a poet in Arabic. As a youth he became the secretary of Bāytūz, the amir of Bost. When in 367/977 Bost was conquered by Seboktekīn (d. 387/997), Abu'l-Fath spent some time in one of the villages of Rokkaj as a fugitive. Later, he entered the service of Seboktekīn at his invitation and was made his secretary, and he remained in this post until the beginning of the reign of Sultan Maḥmūd (388-421/998-1030). Having been slighted by Sultan Maḥmūd, he left his service and went to Transoxiana. Bostī died in 400/1009 or 401/1010 in Bukhara according to Ebn Kallekān (II, pp. 508-09) and Yāqūt (loc. cit.), or in Uzgand according to Manīnī's commentary (*šarḥ*). *Majma' al-foṣaḥā'* (I, p. 150) gives 403/1012-13 as the year of his death. Dawlatšāh (ed. Browne, p. 27), quoting a



poem from 'Emād Zūzanī, confuses him with Abu'l-Fath Majd-al-Dīn and gives 430/1038-39 as the year of his death (cf. Ḥājī Kalīfa, I, col. 772).

Bostī's Arabic prose work is, in the style of 4th/10th-century writers, rhymed, ornate, and decorative; he was particularly skilled in the use of paronomasia (*tajnīs*). Amīn Rāzī (*Haft eq̄līm* I, p. 303) refers to his prose works including *Ādāt al-sādāt wa sādāt al-ādāt* (The habits of the noble and the most noble habits), and quotes from it. Bostī's poems commemorating the early victories of Yamīn-al-Dawla Sultan Maḥmūd were very famous. Abū Maṣṣūr Ṭa'ālebī Nīšābūrī (d. 429/1037), who had composed his *Aḥsan mā same'to* (The best of what I have heard) at the encouragement of Abu'l-Fath Bostī, had spoken highly of him and had also made copious quotations from his works in his *Yatīmat al-dahr*. His *divān* of Arabic poems was published in Beirut in 1294/1877. One of his most famous poems is his *qaṣīda* ending in the letter nun in nearly eighty couplets called *'Onwān al-ḥekam*, which has been translated into Persian both by Badr Jājarmī (d. 686/1287) and, with commentary, by 'Adel b. 'Alī 'Adelā (10th/16th century). According to 'Awfī (*Lobāb* II, pp. 64-65), Abu'l-Fath Bostī had a Persian *divān* of which only four didactic lines in the Khorasani style have been preserved by 'Awfī and quoted by others.

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