

ABOUT THE WORK “ASH-SHAQĀ’IQ AN-NU’MĀNIYYA”

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Abstract

The article analyzes the most famous work of the encyclopedic scholar Akhmad Tashkuprizada – “Ash-shaqā’iq an-nu’ māniyya fī ‘Ulamā’ ad-Dawla al-‘Uthmāniyya”. It also provides a detailed discussion of the history of the work’s composition, its relevance for its time, internal structure, translated versions, and its influence on the formation of scientific worldview.

Keywords: Tashkuprizada, “Ash-shaqā’iq an-nu’ māniyya”, Ottoman Empire, bibliography, biography, ṭabaqāt genre.

The role of the famous encyclopedic scholar Akhmad Tashkuprizada (1495-1560), who lived in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, in Islamic historiography is considered great. The thinker’s scientific heritage on history inspired many scientists in the field of historiography not only in his time, but also in later periods. He explained the science of history in detail, down to the lowest branches, and commented on them.

Akhmad Tashkuprizada was one of the great thinkers of the Ottoman Empire. This scientist was one of the most famous figures of the 16th century. He was a scholar in the fields of tafsir, hadith, jurisprudence, medicine, logic, theology, ethics, philology, philosophy, and classification of sciences. The work “Ash-Shaqaiq an-nu’maniyya” is one of the thinker's most famous works.

In the 16th century, the works of many scientists in Persian and Arabic were translated into Ottoman Turkish. Tashkuprizada draws on the knowledge in these works to create rare works that synthesize texts from various scientific fields. He specifically acknowledges this in his books on metaphysics.

The work “Ash-Shaqaiq an-nu’maniyya fi Ulama’id-Dawlat ul-Usmaniyya” initiated the tradition of writing true biographies in Ottoman literature. In writing this work, Tashkuprizada used his own scientific observations and impressions, information he had heard from his father Muslikhiddin Mustafa and his uncle Qivamuddin Qasim and his teachers, as well as some official instructions [1:485- 486].

This work was written on the basis of the information the thinker had gathered during his 23 years as a mudarris and 5 years as a qazi (1525-1548) in Bursa and Istanbul [2:23]. Written at the age of 63, this work was completed on 16 July 1558 [3:141]. There are approximately 150 manuscript copies of “Ash-Shaqaiq an-nu’maniyya” in Turkish and international libraries, private collections and libraries. The German translation of the work was done by Oskar Rescher [2:26]. The work was translated into modern Turkish in 2007 by Mukharram Tan [4] and in 2019 by Mukhammad Hakimoglu [5].

“Ash-shaqaiq an-nu’maniyya fi Ulamoi’d-Dawlat ul-Usmaniyya” (short title: “Ash-shaqaiq an-nu’maniyya”) consists of the life stories of scholars and saints who lived from Osman Ghazi to the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. The work is divided into 10 sections (sections) according to the number of sultans, and each section covers the lives of scholars who lived during that sultan’s reign. The work contains a bibliography of a total of 521 people, including 371 scholars and 150 saints.

Due to the high importance of this valuable work, it was translated into Ottoman Turkish many times and additional comments were added to some parts. However, this work by Tashkuprizada is considered the first source written during the Ottoman period on the topic of “Ash-Shaqaiq an-Nu’maniyya”.

There are 4 translations of “Ash-Shaqaiq an-Nu’maniyya”:

- a) “Hadaiq ur-Raykhan” – translated into Ottoman Turkish by Makhmud Hawi from Mukhtasibzade Belgrade;
- b) “Haqiq ul-Bayon fi tarjijat-i Shaqaiq-in-Nu’man” – translated by Ashiq Chalabi, with additional comments and information;
- c) “Hadoiq ush-Shaqaiq” – translated by Makhmud Majdi Edirne. This is the most famous translation;
- d) “Al-Hadoiq” – translated by Ibrakhim ibn Akhmad Amasya.

The significant aspect of Ahmad Tashkuprizada’s work “Ash-Shaqaiq an-nu’maniyya” later had a positive impact on the scientific work of other thinkers. This work was continued by subsequent thinkers. In particular:

- a) “Tatimat ush-Shaqaiq in-Nu'maniyya” - written by Ashiq Chalabi, which contains a bibliography of 42 famous authors.
- b) “Al-Iqd ul-manzum fi zikri Afodil ir-Rum” - written in Arabic by Ali ibn Bali, the work contains translations of works created between 1560-1583 and up to the reign of Murad III.
- c) “Hadoiq ul-Haqiq fi Takmilat ish-Shaqaiq” - written by Naviyzada Atai. His work begins where Tashkuprizada left off and covers the period up to 1634.
- d) “Ushshaqizada Zayli” – written by Ushshaqizada Ibrakhim Khasib. This work began in 1633, when Naviyzada Atai stopped, and continued until 1694. He divided the work into five parts: scholars, sheikhs, judges, ministers, and prominent figures of his time.

e) “Vaqoyi ul-Fudalo” – written by Sheykh Makhmud. This is a continuation of Naviyzada Atai’s research. This work covers the period from 1633, when Atai stopped, to 1730. It consists of three volumes and is arranged according to the sultans.

f) “Takmilat ish-Shaqoyiq fi Akhwal il-Haqoyiq” – written by Findiki Ismat. This is a continuation of the research of Sheykh Makhmud, covering the period between 1730 and 1896 [6].

Tashkuprizada states that he had extensively researched biographical stories before writing the work “Ash-Shaqaiq an-Nu’maniyya”, and that although collections of life stories of Arab and Persian scholars had been written, no such work had been written about Ottoman scholars, and that he had also written this work at the request of Zanbillizada Fudayl Chalabiy [3:2]. The Arabic name of the work is based on “Shaqaiq” – mountain tulips (Tashkuprizada likened scholars and saints to mountain tulips), and “Nu’mān” – the name of the Hanafī imam Abu Hanifa Nu’mān ibn Sabit (Tashkuprizada gave this name because he collected biographies of prominent Ottoman Hanafī scholars and sheykhs in the work).

The thinker was also a religious scholar who continued the tradition of classical interpretation and commentary, and was the author of seventeen works and about thirty treatises in various fields such as biography, theology, jurisprudence, commentary, logic, Arabic language and literature, history of science, and medicine. But among them, the work “Ash-Shaqaiq an-nu’maniyya fi Ulama’id-Dawlat ul-USmaniyya” stands out for its historical significance and high scientific value. Therefore, it can be said that he was one of the most important scholars of the 16th century Ottoman Empire.

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