



'ABDALLĀH (2)

'ABDALLĀH, author of *Tārīk-e Dā'ūdī*, fl. early 17th century. Little is known of him personally. His history covers the Afghan rulers of the Delhi sultanate from the childhood of Sultan Bahlūl Lōdī (1451-89) to the fall of Sultan Moḥammad 'Ādel Šāh Sūr (killed in 1555-56); the work is named after Dā'ūd Šāh Karranī (killed in 1576), the last Afghan ruler of eastern Hindustan. An approximate date of composition is furnished by the mention of Jahāngīr as the reigning monarch ('Abd-al-Rašīd, ed., pp. 24, 54). 'Abdallāh says that he was motivated to compile the book by observing, in his study of past kings, that the records of the Afghan kings were found only in scattered form. But a comparison of his history and contemporary chronicles of the Afghans (e.g., Ne'matallāh's *Tārīk-e Kān Jahānī*, Aḥmad Yādgār's *Tārīk-e šāhī*, and Shaikh Kabīr Batīnī's *Afsāna-ye šāhān*) suggests that 'Abdallāh wrote primarily in hope of monetary gain: Books on Afghan history were in demand after Jahāngīr made a favorable change in his policy toward the Afghan nobility.

'Abdallāh's chief sources were Shaikh Rezqallāh Moštāqī's *Vāqe'āt-e Moštāqī*, 'Abbās Sarvānī's *Toḥfa-ye Akbar Šāhī* (also called *Tārīk-e Šēr Šāhī*), and Neẓām-al-dīn Baḳšī's *Ṭabaqāt-e Akbarī*. Only the latter two are actually mentioned by 'Abdallāh, though fully one-third of his work is copied from Moštāqī. In some passages the language has been rendered a bit more elegant. As is the case in *Vāqe'āt*, the account of each reign in *Tārīk-e Dā'ūdī* is interspersed with anecdotes, stories, and legends, making it a curious mixture of fact and fiction. 'Abdallāh was not careful in selecting materials from his sources, nor did he apply any principles of historical or literary criticism to ascertain the truth; he



copied freely. Yet *Tārīk-e Dā’ūdī* acquired the status of a principal source for the history of the Lōdī and Sūrī dynasties, primarily because the *Vāqe’āt*, though the oldest work on the Afghan period, is more rambling and disjointed and thus less useful than the derivative *Tārīk*.

‘Abdallāh had access to some works which are no longer extant, and at various points he does supply additional information of value, e.g., on the development of Agra into a metropolitan center and on the far-reaching net of Sekandar Lōdī’s patronage (pp. 36, 39-40). He also helps to fix the precise location of certain medieval places and the technical sense of problematic terms. His anecdotes, too, may furnish historically useful data; e.g., he indicates that Šēr Šāh Sūr made land grants for the support of brahmins as well as for Muslim scholars (pp. 138-39).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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