



AMĪRAK BAL'AMĪ

AMĪRAK BAL'AMĪ, name given to ABŪ 'ALĪ MOḤAMMAD (also called Baḷ'amī-e Kūček “the lesser, younger”), son of Abu'l-Faẓl MoḤammad b. 'Obaydallāh Baḷ'amī (also called Baḷ'amī-e Bozorg “the greater, elder”); both served as viziers of the Samanids. Two possible explanations of the name Baḷ'amī are given in Sam'ānī's *Ketāb al-ansāb*: 1. The Baḷ'amī family stemmed from the Arab tribe of the Banū Tamīm and Baḷ'am was a place in Asia Minor conquered by them during the campaigns of Maslama (d. between 120/738 and 123/741, son of the Omayyad caliph 'Abd-al-Malek). 2. The family were from Baḷ'amān, near the village of Lāsġerd (i.e., Balāšġerd, see Yāqūt, I, p. 708) in the district of Marv. Abū 'Alī became vizier towards the end of the reign of 'Abd-al-Malek b. Nūḡ (343-50/954-61) and retained the office under his successor, Maṣṣūr b. Nūḡ (350-65/961-76). According to Gardīzī (ed. Ḥabībī, p. 163), Abū 'Alī died in Jomādā II, 363/between 27 February-27 March 974) while still employed as vizier; but according to 'Otbī (*al-Ta'riḡ al-yamīnī*, ed. Manīnī, Cairo, 1287/1870, I, p. 170) he was reappointed vizier by Nūḡ b. Maṣṣūr (365-87/976-97) in 382/992 and retired in the same year. 'Otbī does not give the date of Abū 'Alī's death; since there is no mention of him after Maṣṣūr b. Nūḡ's reign, he must have died between 382/992 and 387/997.

Baḷ'amī is best known for his Persian translation of Ṭabarī, which was done for Maṣṣūr b. Nūḡ. Because he adds supplementary material, some of which is not found elsewhere, the work is called *Tāriḡ-eBaḷ'amī*. According to *Moġmal al-tawāriḡ* (p. 180) Abū 'Alī began his translation in 352/963; it is therefore the oldest new-Persian prose work, after the preface (all that has been preserved)



of the prose *Šāh-nāma* of Abū Manṣūr. The *Tārīk-e Baḷ'amī* was translated into Eastern Turkish by Waḥīdī of Balk in 928/1522, into Ottoman Turkish by order of Aḥmad Pāšā, and into Arabic in 935/1528. Numerous manuscripts exist, and there is a French translation by M. H. Zotenberg.

Neẓāmī 'Arūzī mentions (*Čahār maqāla*, ed. M. Qazvīnī, London, 1927, p. 15) a book by Baḷ'amī called *Tawqī'āt*, and in the *Farhang-e Jahāngīrī* two verses by Baḷ'amī are quoted; but in neither case is it made clear whether the author was the elder Baḷ'amī or his son.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See under Baḷ'amī in the list of short references (p. 9).

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M. T. Bahār and M. P. Gonābādī, Tehran, 1353 Š./1974.

See also Kṽāndmīr, *Dostūr al-wozarā'*, ed.

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Šafā, *Adabiyāt*, 2nd ed., I, pp. 353, 618-19.