



## BADĀ'ŪNĪ, 'ABD-AL-QĀDER

**BADĀ'ŪNĪ, 'ABD-AL-QĀDER** B. MOLŪKŠĀH B. ḤĀMED, polyglot man of letters, historian, and translator of Arabic and Sanskrit works into Persian who flourished during the reign of Akbar.

*Life.* Badā'ūnī was born at Toda Bhim in the former princely state of Jaypur on 17 Rabī' II 947/21 August 1540 (*Montaqab al-tawārīk*, Calcutta, I, p. 363). At the age of eighteen he was taken to Sanbhal to study under Shaikh Ḥāṭema Sanbhalī (I, p. 425, III, pp. 2, 66). In 966/1558-59 he went to Agra (II, p. 32), the then center of learning, where he studied for some years under Shaikh Mobārak Nāgawrī (III, pp. 67, 74). After his father died at Agra in 969/1561 (II, p. 53) he moved to Badā'ūn (Badā'ōn), where he married in 975/1567-68 for the second time (II, p. 105); about his first marriage we know nothing. In 973/1565-66, leaving Badā'ūn, he became the *ṣadr* (highest justice officer) of Ḥosayn Khan (II, pp. 86-87, 222), the *jāgīrdār* (land grant holder) of Paṭiālī (not Paṭiālā, as in *ET*<sup>1</sup>, p. 856), and moved with him to Lucknow and Gānt-u-Gōlā (the place is still unidentified). In 981/1574 he left the service of Ḥosayn Khan following a quarrel and went to Agra where he was presented to Akbar (II, p. 172). Impressed by his ability Akbar appointed him in 983/1575-76 as one of the seven court imams to lead the Wednesday prayers (II, p. 226). In the same year 1,000 *bīḡas* of land were granted to him as a *madad-e ma'āš* (income supplement) at Basāwar and after this he took a prominent part in literary activities. (In 997/1588-89 the grant was transferred to Badā'ūn; II, p. 368.)

At about the same time as Badā'ūnī, Abu'l-Faẓl, son of Badā'ūnī's old teacher Nāgawrī, also came to the court and he and his brother Fayzī gradually



became Akbar's favorites: they led an increasingly unorthodox, syncretistic, esoteric movement at the court, which culminated in the famous Dīn-e Elāhī, Akbar's private religious sect. Badā'ūnī, a strict and conservative Sunni, lost Akbar's favor and never won it back. The date of his death ranges from 1000 to 1024 (according to Storey, II/2, p. 1309, 1024/1615 may be nearest to the truth). His grave is according to Baḳtāvār Singh's Urdu *Tārīḳ-e Badāyūn* (Bareilly, 1285/1668) at 'Aṭāpūr near Badā'ūn.

*Works.* Badā'ūnī's fame rests mainly on his Persian *Montaḳab al-tawārīḳ*, also called *Tārīḳ-e Badā'ūnī*, a general history of India from Seboktegīn (r. 366-387/977-97) up to the year 1004/1595-96, which he began in 999/1590. The first volume starts with the Ghaznavids and ends with the death of Homāyūn, the second covers the first forty years of Akbar's reign, and the third consists of a *taḍkera* or biographical anthology of saints, physicians, and men of letters of the time. One of the sources used by Badā'ūnī was Neẓām-al-Dīn Aḥmad's *Ṭabaqāt-e akbarī*. The *Montaḳab al-tawārīḳ* was not published during the lifetime of its author. He deliberately kept it secret as it contained critical remarks about Akbar's religious policies such as prohibiting the call for prayers in the imperial palace, the slaughter of cows, and the establishing of a brothel in the city where wine was kept running 24 hours a day.

Badā'ūnī was also a poet with the penname "Qāderī," but none of his poetry has come down to us. Other works of Badā'ūnī, most of them commissioned by Akbar, comprise the no longer extant *Ketāb al-aḥādīṭ* (989/1581), a collection of forty Hadiths on the merits of holy war (*jehād*), and the *Najāt al-Rašīd*, a Sufi ethical treatise containing interesting historical anecdotes, controversial discussions, and an account of the Mahdawī movement (ed. Lahore, 1972). In 999/1590 he collaborated on a no longer extant Persian translation of Yāqūt's *Moġam al-boldān*. Translations from Sanskrit include the following: *Nāma-ye ḳeradafzā*, composed in 989/1581 and partly in 1003/1595, a translation of a famous Sanskrit story collection about Rāja Vikramāditya called in Hindi *Singhāsan battīsī* (The thirty-two [tales] of the throne); several Persian translations of this work exist but none of them can be definitely identified as that of Badā'ūnī. While he was only a collaborator on a translation of the *Mahābhārata* (Persian title *Razm-nāma*; 990/1582), he alone completed the translation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (*Tarjama-ye Ketāb-e Rāmāyan*; 992-97/1584-89). In 983/1575-76 he took part in the translation of *Atharvaveda*, but this was not completed (*Montaḳab* II, p. 212). In 1003/1595 he was ordered to complete the *Baḥr al-Asmār*, a translation of some story (possibly the *Kathāsaritsāgara*)



made for Sultan Zayn-al-‘Ābedīn of Kashmir. His *Tarjama-ye Tārīk-eKašmīr* (999/1590-91) is a revised and abridged translation of a history of Kashmir, probably the *Rāja-taraṅgiṇī*, of which a translation had previously been made by Mollā Shah Moḥammad Šāhbādī.

In 1000/1591-92 he was instructed by Akbar to epitomize the Arabic portion of the *Jāme‘ al-tawārīk* (*Montakab* II, p. 84). Finally, he assisted in the compilation of *Tārīk-e alfī*, a general history of Islam down to the 1000th year, of which the first two volumes were revised by Badā‘ūnī.

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