



BAHĀ'-AL-DĪN BAĠDĀDĪ

BAHĀ'-AL-DĪN BAĠDĀDĪ, MOḤAMMAD B. MO'AYYAD BAĠDĀDĪ (or BAĠDĀDAKĪ) K̲VĀRAZMĪ, a master of the art of Persian letter-writing (*tarassol*) in the 6th/12th century (d. after 688/1289). He was from Baġdādak, a place in K̲vārazm. According to the *Tārīk-egozīda* (apud M. Qazvīnī in 'Awfī, *Lobāb* I, pp. 349-50), he was the younger brother of Shaikh Majd-al-Dīn Abū Sa'īd b. Mo'ayyad Baġdādī (Baġdādakī) K̲vārazmī, a well-known mystic in the period around the turn of the 6th/12th and 7th/13th centuries. Nothing else is known about his background and early life. His rise to fame began when he took charge of the *dīvān-e enšā'* (chancellery) of the K̲vārazmšāh 'Alā'-al-Dīn Tekeš b. Īl Arslān (r. 568/1172-596/1200). In the *Haft eq̄līm* (I, p. 106) he is said to have also been the secretary of the next K̲vārazmšāh, Sultan MoḤammad (596/1199-617/1220), but this is hard to verify.

Bahā'-al-Dīn's connection with the Khwarazmian court twice landed him in prison: once after a disagreement with Tekeš's vizier Neẓām-al-Molk Šams-al-Dīn Mas'ūd Heravī (d. 596/1199-1200), and for a much longer time, from 582/1186 to 585/1189, when he was detained at Marv by Tekeš's brother and rival for the throne, Soltānšāh MoḤammad b. Īl Arslān (d. 589/1193). He was set free when the two brothers made peace (Jovaynī, II, p. 23). During this second spell he wrote his *Resāla-ye ḥabsīya* (Message from prison), a fine specimen of Persian prose. After his release he reentered the service of 'Alā'-al-Dīn Tekeš. There are mentions of him from then until the year 588/1192 (*ibid.*, p. 28). Rāzī's statement (*Haft eq̄līm* I, p. 106), followed by Hedāyat's *Majma' al-foṣaḥā'* (I, p. 443) that he died in 545/1150 is therefore incorrect.



Bahā'-al-Dīn won fame in his own lifetime for the excellence of his prose writings and the cogency of his poems. The collection of his official letters named *al-Tawassol ela'l-tarassol* (Guide to letter-writing; q.v.) received high praise among contemporary litterateurs such as 'Awfī (*Lobāb* I, p. 139) and Sa'd-al-Dīn Varāvīnī, the author of the *Marzbān-nāma*. He excelled in writing ornate Persian prose, usually laden with Arabic words and phrases. In the history of Persian prose he stands among the foremost pioneers of this style.

Bahā'-al-Dīn's *al-Tawassol ela'l-tarassol* was printed together with his *Resāla-ye ḥabsīya* at Tehran in 1315 Š./1936. A complete *qaṣīda* (in praise of 'Alā'-al-Dīn Tekeš) and eleven other verses from his pen are quoted in 'Awfī's *Lobāb al-albāb*; they are enough to show that he was a skillful writer of poetry in the style prevalent in the 6th/12th century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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