



BAQTĀVAR KHAN, MOḤAMMAD

BAQTĀVAR KHAN, MOḤAMMAD (1029?-96/1620?-85), historian and official at the court of the Mughal emperor Awrangzēb (1068-1118/1658-1707) and a patron of literature. A eunuch, he joined the service of Prince Awrangzēb in 1065/1654, initially as a presenter of petitions (*kedmat-e 'arāyez*); but during the war of succession between Awrangzēb and his brothers in 1067-68/1657-58, he became the prince's personal attendant (Bakhtāwar, I, pp. 25, 62, 101, 130). At the second coronation of Awrangzēb in Ramazān, 1069/June, 1659, Baqtāvar served as a whisk bearer, and in August of the same year he received the title of khan (ibid., pp. 152, 165). In 1076/1666 he was given the *manṣab* of 1,150 *savārs* (ibid., p. 338), and four years later he became *dārūgā-ye kawāṣṣān*. He died at Aḥmadnagar on 15 Rabī' I 1096/19 February 1685 and was buried at Baqtāvārpūra (now Bastī Nabī Karīm) near Delhi.

Baqtāvar's first work, *Ā'īna-ye baqt* or *Čahār ā'īna* (comp. 1068/1658), describes the four battles Awrangzēb fought against his brothers in his bid for the throne. His *Bayāz*, completed in 1084/1673-74, comprises selections from the poetry of well-known Persian mystical poets such as Sanā'ī, 'Aṭṭār, and Rūmī. *Rīāz al-awlīā'*, a *taḍkera* of Sufis and '*olamā'* from the classical period to Awrangzēb's reign, is an important source for the religious personages of the period. His epitome *Mer'āt al-ālam* is a compendium of history divided into an introduction (*moqaddema*), seven parts (*ārāyez*), an appendix (*afzāyez*), and a conclusion (*kātema*). The book is famous for its seventh part, which is



subdivided into three sections (*pīrāyeš*); it is one of the most important primary sources for the political history of the first ten years of Awrangzēb's period as well as for the intellectual and cultural history of the era. Written in simple Persian, the *Mer'āt* is not an official history of Awrangzēb's reign but complements the official chronicle *Ālamgīr-nāma* of Monšī MoḤammad Kāzem by providing additional details of certain events and personalities (for details, see *ibid.*, introd., pp. 23-45). Another significant contribution of this work lies in the sections devoted to the *mašā'ek* and the '*olamā*' (part seven), calligraphers (appendix), and the poets of Awrangzēb's period (conclusion). Elliot and other scholars have attributed *Mer'āt al-ālam* and other works by Baktāvar to MoḤammad Baqā, Baktāvar's contemporary and author of *Mer'āt-e jahānnomā*. However, from the contemporary and near-contemporary sources it is established that Baktāvar was indeed the author and compiler of the works attributed to him above (for details, see *ibid.*, introd., pp. 14-16).

Baktāvar was interested in art and literature and was the patron of a number of Persian poets, facilitating the entry of numerous poets, writers, and '*olamā*' into the imperial court (*ibid.*, introd., pp. 18-19). He also took an active interest in public building activities such as mosques, *sarāys*, and a township near Delhi (*ibid.*, II, pp. 519-24), and had a mausoleum constructed for himself.

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