



BARANĪ, ŻĪĀ'-AL-DĪN

BARANĪ, ŻĪĀ'-AL-DĪN B. MO'AYYED-AL-MOLK, (ca. 684-758/1285-1357), Indian-born Muslim historian who wrote in the period of the Delhi sultanate. Related by descent and marriage to middle-ranking Muslim service families (his father was *nā'eb* of Baran and his uncle was *kūtwāl* of Delhi), Baranī spent his maturity as courtier and sometimes boon companion (*nadīm*) of Sultan Moḥammad Toḡloq (r. 725-52/1324-51); earlier, Baranī had been an attendant (*kādem*) upon the *čestī* shaikh Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā' (636-725/1238-1325). Loss of royal favor and temporary internment in the Punjab fort of Bhatnēr under Moḥammad Toḡloq's successor Fīrūz Shah (r. 752-790/1351-88) turned Baranī toward writing. Baranī may have been adjudged guilty of association with the raising at Delhi of a rival to Fīrūz Shah, following Moḥammad Toḡloq's death near Thatta in Sind. Aḥmad Ayāz, Moḥammad Toḡloq's appointed deputy at the capital, unaware that the army with Moḥammad Toḡloq had accepted Fīrūz as sultan, put a young lad on the throne (alleging him to be the late sultan's son), with the support or acquiescence of some officers and notables at Delhi.

Baranī's extant works are: *Na't-e moḥammadī*, *Akbār-e Barmakīān*, *Fatāwā-ye jahāndārī*, and *Tārīk-e fīrūzšāhī*. Written with the *Yawm al-ḥesāb* in mind, the *Fatāwā-ye jahāndārī* and the *Tārīk-efīrūzšāhī* respectively imbue and are imbued by an ideal of Islamic rulership expressed in part through symbols and motifs which express Baranī's understanding and representation of pre-Islamic Iranian monarchical tradition. Baranī's *Fatāwā-ye jahāndārī* does more than cite apothegms and anecdotes of old Persian kings, viziers, and



sages along with traditions from the prophet Moḥammad and memorabilia of the early Arab and 'Abbasid caliphs (cf. Ġazālī's *Naṣīḥat al-molūk*); Baranī islamizes yet further the Zoroastrian maxim that “religion and rulership are twin brothers”—he proclaims that, given the deterioration in human behavior in his age and the fading force of the ascetic example of the Prophet and the first four Sunni caliphs, pious Muslim kings should employ the force, generate the awe, and display the ostentation of the royal descendants of Cyrus (*Fatāwā-ye jahāndārī*, pp. 139-42). Kings must maintain their authority, even at the cost of killing Muslims for non-*ḥadd* offenses, but seek their peace with God by using authority thus protected to uphold the *Šarī'a*, curb heresy, and abase the infidel. In thus serving Islam, Muslim rulers must be advised by viziers and served by functionaries of high birth and character. Hostile to the promotion under the Delhi sultanate of Hindu converts, Baranī appealed to Iranian traditions to deny that high moral and intellectual attainment could accompany low birth (see, e.g., *Fatāwā-ye jahāndārī*, fols. 211b-213a, pp. 288-91; *Tārīk-e fīrūzšāhī*, pp. 36-37). His *Tārīk-e fīrūzšāhī* was a subtle assessment, according to his criteria, of the performances of seven sultans of Delhi. Baranī's experience in India prompted his judgments, but he looked to Iran as a cultural region for their nourishment.

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