



BHANDĀRĪ

BHANDĀRĪ, SOJĀN RĀY, putative author of *Ḳolāṣat al-tawārīḳ*, a general history of India written in Persian during the reign of Awrangzēb, with special emphasis on the rulers of Delhi. The author's name has been determined from colophons in various manuscripts of the work, which are not always in agreement

(for varying readings of the different parts of the name, see Morley, *Catalogue RAS*, p. 69; Browne, p. 158; Elliot, *History of India* VIII, p. 5; Ašraf-al-Ḥaqq, no. 201; Kamāl-al-Dīn and 'Abd-al-Moqtader, p. 74;

Semyonov, no. 248; Ethé, *Cat. India Office Library*, nos. 362, 363; Z. Ḥasan, p. v; Rieu, *Persian Manuscripts* I, p. 230, III, p. 908; Ethé, 1889, I, no. 246; Storey, I, p. 454). Sojān is now generally accepted as his first name because it is a common Hindu name and belongs to at least three men mentioned in *Ḳolāṣat al-tawārīḳ* (pp. 67, 496, 497).

According to the text (pp. 6, 66-71), Bhandārī was born in Batālā in the Panjab (not Patiala, as in Rieu, *Persian Manuscripts* I, p. 230) and served from his youth as *monšī* "secretary" in Awrangzēb's administration. Elliott (*History of India* VIII, p. 7) claimed that, aside from the use of Vekramī dates, nothing in *Ḳolāṣat al-tawārīḳ* suggests that its author was a Hindu. Instead of the normal Muslim pious phrases (the *ḥamd* and *na't*), however, the work begins with a discourse on the variety of religions, all of which the author considers divine; he provides a particularly detailed description of Hindu religion and myth, and his account of the beginning of the Muslim period is tinged with bitter-



ness. These details suggest that he was indeed a Hindu.

Bhandārī claims to have completed *Ḳolāṣat al-tawārīḳ* in 1107/1695-96 (p. 8), though he seems to have continued it to 1111/1699-1700 (pp. 34, 65; see Ansari, p. 476). The work is in four sections, dealing respectively with Indian flora and fauna, the Hindu sciences, and Hindu mystics; the geography and revenues of the eighteen Mughal provinces (including Kabul); the history of India up to the overthrow of Rāy Pethaurā (Prithavī Rāj) by Šehāb-al-Dīn Ġūrī in 588/1192; and the history of Muslim rulers in India from Sobokteġin to the accession of Awrangzēb ‘Ālamġir in 1068/1658. In some manuscripts the text ends with the royal army’s pursuit of Awrangzēb’s elder brother Dārā Šokūh, whereas others also record the main events of the emperor’s reign (Ivanow, I, p. 56; Ethé, *Cat. India Office Library*, nos. 362, 364). In addition, two later supplements (*žamīma*) are known: one by Jay Kešan Dās Mehrā covering Awrangzēb’s reign, the other by an anonymous author continuing the history to 1158/1745 (‘Abd-Allāh, p. 66; Storey, I, p. 455).

Scholars have differed on the historical value of *Ḳolāṣat al-tawārīḳ*. Some claim that it is simply a copy of a work called *Moktaṣar* or of information in *Tārīḳ-eFerešta* (Morley, *Catalogue RAS*, p. 70; Elliot, *History of India VIII*, pp. 5-12). Charles Rieu (*Persian Manuscripts I*, p. 231), however, argues that both *Ḳolāṣat al-tawārīḳ* and *Moktaṣar* were written by the same person. Bhandārī himself declares that his intention was to prepare a short work (*moktaṣar*) containing a summary (*kolāṣa*) of twenty-seven general historical works, as well as several local histories. His Persian-language sources include *Tārīḳ-e Solṭān Maḥmūd Ġaznavī* by the Ghaznavid court poet ‘Onšorī, but there is no mention of *Tārīḳ-eFerešta*.

Bhandārī’s accounts of most reigns are cursory. Exceptions are those of Maḥmūd (pp. 165-83) and Jahāngīr (pp. 441-83); fifty pages are also devoted to the wars of succession between Awrangzēb and his brothers Morād Baḳš, Moḥammad Šojā’, and Dārā Šokūh. The accounts of the Hindu rajas of Delhi have been extracted and published, with serious omissions and additions, in an Urdu edition entitled *Ārāyeš-e maḥfel* by Šēr-‘Alī Afsōs (Calcutta, 1220/1805).

Two other works of uncertain authorship have been attributed to Bhandārī. The first, *Ḳolāṣat al-makātīb*, outlines a model course of study for a *monšī*: It should begin with the works of Sa’dī and include *Enšā’-e Yūsofī* and *Enšā’-e Abu’l-Faẓl* and the works of other famous Persian poets, as well as calligraphy and arithmetic. The work also contains much information on various writing



materials and their sources. The attribution to Bhandārī is based on a similarity of phrasing used to characterize those whom he served (*ṣāḥebān-e dawlat-e eqbāl wa nāẓemān-e molk-e māl*, p. 3; cf. *nāẓemān-e omūr-e mamlakaye māl wa ṣāḥebān-e kārgāh-e dawlat-e eqbāl* in *Ḳolāṣat al-tawārīk*, p. 6).

Ḳolāṣat al-sīāq, a work on arithmetic and accounting completed in 1115/1703-04, has been attributed to him because of a comparable expression (*nāẓemān-e molk-e māl*, fol. 2). According to this text, accounts were kept in Hindi until the reign of Akbar, when the courtier Tōdar Mal changed to Persian in 991/1583. As a result, Fayzī translated the Hindi accounting text *Līlāwatī* into Persian, and several Iranian officials became skilled accountants (e.g., Badal Khan of Mašhad, Ḳvāja Shah Maṣṣūr of Šīrāz, Ḳvāja ‘Aṭā Beg Rūmī, and Ḳvāja Neẓām-al-Dīn Baḳṣī). Nevertheless, native Hindus continued to serve in this capacity; in the Panjab and Moltān the Khatrī Hindu accountants even received the title *ḳvāja* normally reserved to Muslim *monšīs* (Ansari, pp. 403-05; Rieu, *Persian Manuscripts* II, p. 799).

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