



## MENHĀJ-E SERĀJ

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**MENHĀJ-e SERĀJ**, Menhāj-al-Din Abu ‘Amr ‘Otmān b. Serāj-al-Din Moḥammad Jowzjāni, *qāzi*, author of a general history in Persian valuable as a first-hand source for the history of the Ghurids, the Šamsi Delhi Sultans, and the irruption of the Mongols into the eastern Islamic lands (see [Ṭabaqāt-e Nāṣeri](#)).

Everything known about him and his career stems from mentions in his own history. He was born in Ġur in 589/1193 into a family stemming from [Jowzjān](#) in what is now northwestern Afghanistan and famed for its religious and legal learning (Menhāj, I, p. 372) and he died at Delhi in the second half of the 13th century, probably in the reign of Sultan Balaban (r. 664-86/1266-89). His father had been made chief *qāzi* of the Ghurid principality of Bāmiān and Ṭokārestān in 591/1195 by its ruler Bahā’-al-Din Sām (see [GHURIDS](#)) (idem, I, pp. 388-89), but was killed whilst on a mission to the ‘Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣer. Menhāj-al-Din mentions that, as an adult, he was at the Ghurid capital Firuzkuh, at the court of the Naṣrid maliks of Sistān in Zaranj and at Tulak in Ġur; at Tulak he took part in defending the fortress against the incoming Mongols in 617/1220 (idem, I, pp. 285, 372, II, p. 113).

With the Mongols; overrunning of Transoxiana and Khorasan, Menhāj-al-Din decided to move to northwestern India, at that time controlled by the Šamsi maliks, at the outset former amirs of the Ghurids (see [Delhi Sultanate i](#)). In 624/1227 he reached Učč, where Nāṣer-al-Din Qobāča made him head of the Firuzi *madrasa* there and judge of the army (idem, I, p. 420), and then in 625/1228 entered the service of Sultan Šams-al-Din Iltutmuš at Delhi (idem, I, p. 447). Over the next decades he was active in the legal and political affairs of



the Sultanate. In 630/1233 he became *qāzi* and imam at the newly-conquered Gwalior (idem, I, pp. 448-49); in 635/1237-38 principal of the Nāṣeriya *madrassa* in Delhi; and in 639/1241-42 became chief *qāzi* of Delhi for Sultan Mo‘ezz-al-Din Bahrāmšāh (idem, I, pp. 466-67). Intrigues compelled him to move a year later to Laḵnawti in the Bengal Sultanate, and whilst there in 641/1243-44 he derived information about a military campaign into Tibet and expeditions against the Hindu Rajas of the western Bengal-Bihar region (idem, I, pp. 429-31, 435-37). Two years later he was back in Delhi and in favor with Sultan Nāṣer-al-Din Maḥmud-šāh, dedicatee of the *Ṭabaqāt-e nāṣeri*, recovering his old offices there and receiving the title of *Ṣadr-e jahān* (idem, I, p. 488), but losing them again in the times of political upheaval. During these years Menhāj-al-Din enjoyed the patronage of the highly influential Uluḡ Kān Balaban, and frequently mentions gifts and stipends from him, he ends his history in 658/1260 (idem, I, p. 411), some six years before Balaban actually became sultan, and presumably died during the latter’s reign.

*Bibliography:*

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