



## ṬABAQĀT-E NĀŞERI

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**ṬABAQĀT-E NĀŞERI**, an extensive general history composed in Persian by b. Serāj-al-Din Jowzjāni, who for the first part of his career lived in Ġur under the Ghurid sultans and latterly in Muslim India under the Moʻezzi or Šamsi Delhi sultans (b. 589/1193 in Ġur, d. at Delhi in India apparently in the time of Ġiāt-al-Din Balaban, r. 664-86/1266-89; see [MEHNĀJ-E SERĀJ](#)).

The work is dedicated to the son of the Delhi Sultan Iltutmīš, Nāşer-al-Din Abuʻl-Możaffar Maḥmud-šāh (hence its name “The Nāşerean Tables”). It was composed, it seems, during the author’s retirement, mainly in 657-58/1259-60. It comprises 23 *ṭabaqāt*, literally “layers,” beginning with Adam, the Biblical Patriarchs and Prophets, the forebears of the Prophet Moḥammad and his career (*ṭabaqa* 1), and after a consideration of the Patriarchal, Umayyad and ʻAbbasid caliphates (2-4), deals with the ancient kings of Persia, from Kayumart and the Pishdadis to the Sasanians, and with Tobbaʻ kings of Yemen and the governors there up to the Islamic conquest (5-6). For these two sections, Jowzjāni cites as his source “histories of the Persians which Ferdowsi used in his *Šāh-nāma*,” but regards this information as dubious and problematic compared with what he will retail of history as known in the pure light of Islam (Jowzjāni, I, p. 131). The main body of the work deals with the ruling dynasties of the Iranian lands, first those actually of Persian origin, the Taherids, the Saffarids, the Samanids and the Buyids (*ṭabaqāt* 7-10), but then those Turkish incomers to the Persian lands, the Ghaznavids (11) and the Saljuqs and their Atabegs (the Great Saljuq sultans, up to and including Sanjar, the Saljuqs of Rum, the Ildegizid Atabegs of Azarbaijan, the Salghurid Atabegs



of Fārs and the brief line of Mo'ayyed-al-Din Ay Aba in Nishapur after Sanjar's death; 12-13). There follow the Iranian Naṣrid *maleks* of Nimruz or Sistan (14) and the "Kurdish *maleks* of Syria," i.e. the Ayyubids, presumably included because of the origin of their progenitor Zangi in the slave entourage of the Saljuq Sultan Malekšāh (15). With the Khwarazmshahs of Anuštegin's line (16), Jowzjāni was approaching events of his own time, and with the Šansabānis or Ghurid dynasty (divided into the lines ruling in Ġur, in Bāmiān and Ṭokārestān, and in Ġazna) (17-19), and the Ghurid commanders in Northern India, out of whom arose the Slave Kings of Delhi and their provincial commanders (20-22), he was dealing with contemporary history. The final section (23) deals with "the disasters befalling Islam and the irruption of the infidels, may God cause them to perish," i.e., the Mongols, up to the time of the Il-Khanid Hūlegü and the Golden Horde Khan Berke.

These sections 16-23 in fact comprise over two-thirds of the whole book (I, pp. 297-497; II, pp. 1-29) and are obviously of outstanding importance as source material for the Ghurids and their meteoric rise to power in eastern Afghanistan; for the history of their epigoni, their Turkish commanders in India and the Delhi Sultanate, according to K. A. Nizami, "the only connected and coherent narration of the political and military activity of the [Delhi Sultanate] period" (p. 71); and for the cataclysm of the Mongol onslaught on the eastern Islamic lands. For the history of the Ghurids, he explicitly mentions seeing in 602/1205-06, at the Ghurid capital Firuzkuh, the genealogical work of his contemporary Faḡr-al-Din Mobārakšāh Marvarruzi (i.e. the *Šajara-ye ansāb*; see [FAḠR-E MODABBER](#)) and deriving material from it (I, pp. 318-19). The *Ṭabaqāt-e nāṣeri* may likewise be regarded as first-hand for events in Muslim India after 623/1226, the year when Jowzjāni left Ġur for the subcontinent, embarking on a diplomatic and legal career which was to raise him to the supreme post of *qāzi al-qoṣāt* in Delhi. He was often an eyewitness of significant events in both his homeland of Ġur and in India, and he frequently mentions deriving valuable information from "trustworthy persons" (*teqāt*), unfortunately without naming these. He does, however, explicitly state that he received information orally from participants in significant events, e.g., when at Lakhnawati in Bengal in 642/1244-45, his host, the local governor Mo'tamed-al-Dawla, described to him an expedition into Tibet in which he had participated (I, pp. 429ff.).

Nizami again has pointed out that on Indo-Muslim matters, Jowzjāni's history is informative rather than illuminating, being essentially one of events told



from the viewpoint of the Turkish military and ruling classes, to whom he was closely linked by bonds of favor and patronage. Hence one could hardly expect it to be critical of these ruling strata; nor does he provide material for us to estimate the part of the non-Turkish elements in the Delhi Sultanate, or show any interest in administrative or social institutions (Nizami, pp. 80-84). P. Jackson (pp. 45-46) has likewise noted the confused arrangement of materials resulting from the author's repetition of the same events in different *ṭabaqāt*, with varying and even conflicting details.

For the Mongol invasions, which were of course for him very contemporary history, Jowzjāni got direct information from persons who had been eyewitnesses to events in Transoxiana and Khorasan when the Mongols arrived, such as the Sayyed-e Ajall Bahā'-al-Din Rāzi; a secretary of the Khwarazmshahs, Tāj-al-Din 'Emād-al-Molk; the merchant K̄vāja Aḥmad Vaḳṣi; the *qāzi* Waḥid-al-Din Fušanji; the Ghurid Malek Tāj-al-Din Ḥasan; K̄vāja Rašid-al-Din Balki; Sayyed Ašraf-al-Din b. Jalāl-al-Din of Samarqand; and others (see on these informants, Nizami, pp. 79-80).

Although it is these later, highly detailed sections which are of most interest for the historian of the eastern Iranian fringes of the Islamic world and of early Muslim India, the earlier sections of the *Ṭabaqāt-e nāseri* dealing with the history of the post-caliphal dynasties are nevertheless far from wholly derivative and without interest. Jowzjāni has precious information not found elsewhere on the demise of the Samanids and the concurrent establishment of slave commanders in Ġazna and the rise of the Ghaznavids, and his material on the later members of this last dynasty, for which information elsewhere is very sparse, is likewise valuable. For the earlier Islamic centuries, their dynasties and their chronology, he mentions that he drew upon various sources, including Ṭabari's History (most probably via Bal'ami's Persian translation); Moṭahhar b. Ṭāher Maqdesi's *Ketāb al-Badw wa'l-ta'rik*; and Biruni's *al-Qānun al-Mas'udi*. For the Saffarids, the Samanids, and the Ghurids, he mentions the (lost) history known as the *Qeşaṣ-e Tāni* of Ebn Hayṣam Nābi. For the Ghaznavids, Jowzjāni mentions Sallāmi's History of the Rulers of Khorasan; a *Tārik-e Mojadwal* of 'Emād-al-Din Moḥammad b. 'Ali (both lost); and Abu'l-Faḫr Bayhaqi's *Mojalladāt*, in particular, the (lost) section of these on the founder Sebüktegin, and he quotes Bayhaqi's master Abu Naṣr Moškān (from the latter's administrative memoirs, the *Maqāmāt?*).

The *Ṭabaqāt-e nāseri* survives in some dozen manuscripts, the oldest apparently stemming from the 8th century; see Storey, I, pp. 68-70, and Storey-



Bregel, I, pp. 294-98. A partial printed text was made by W. Nassau Lees in the Bibliotheca Indica series (Calcutta, 1863-64), and a largely (but not totally) complete edited text, with many *ta'liqāt* and indices, by 'Abd-al-Ḥayy Ḥabibi. Extracts were poorly translated in Elliott and Dowson (I, pp. 259-353). Major H. G. Raverty made a largely complete English translation, *Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāşirī*, comprising all but the early, totally derivative *ṭabaqāt* and with copious notes and commentary citing parallel or supplementary sources (see under Jowzjāni in Bibliography); the work's shortcomings, and the uncriticalness of the commentary, in particular, were, however, severely criticized by Barthold (pp. 60-61).

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