## CONTENTS

**Aufsätze – Articles – Articles**

MONIKA ARNEZ / CAHYANINGRUM DEWOJATI ........................................................................................................................................ 7
Sexuality, Morality and the Female Role: Observations on Recent Indonesian Women’s Literature

TANJA CHRISTMANN ........................................................................................................................................................................ 39
LOHAS: Ein Label für den japanischen Buchmarkt nach der Jahrtausendwende

MAYA KELTERBORN ........................................................................................................................................................................ 55
Zum Verhältnis von Gehalt und Gestalt in klassischen chinesischen Gedichten

PETER-ULRICH MERZ-BENZ ......................................................................................................................................................... 89
The Chinese Laundryman: A Model for the Social Type of the Sojourner – and a Living Transcultural Phenomenon

WOLFGANG MICHEL ........................................................................................................................................................................ 101
Johann Caspar Scheuchzer (1702–1729) und die Herausgabe der *History of Japan*

TILMANN TRAUSCH ........................................................................................................................................................................ 139
Rewriting Barani? The description of the Delhi Sultanate in the *Rīḥla* of Ibn Baṭṭūta/Ibn Djuzyay and the *Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī* of Ḫiyā’ al-Dīn Barānī

RALPH WEBER / GARRETT BARDEN ............................................................................................................................................. 173
Rhetorics of Authority: *Leviticus* and the *Analects* Compared

*AS/EALXIV•1•2010*
Rezensionen – Comptes rendus – Reviews

RAMZI BAALBAKI (ED.) ................................................................................................................241
_The Early Islamic Grammatical Tradition_. (Amidu Olalekan Sanni)

HARRY FALK & WALTER SLAJE (ED.) ..................................................................................243
_Oskar von Hinüber, Kleine Schriften_. (K. R. Norman)

GEORGE SALIBA .........................................................................................................................246
_Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance_.
(Carlo Scardino)

Autoren – Auteurs – Authors....................................................................................................259
REWRITING BARANĪ?
THE DESCRIPTION OF THE DELHI SULTANATE IN
THE Rīhla OF IBN BAṬṬŪTA/IBN DJUZAYY AND THE
Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī OF ḪIYĀ’ AL-DĪN BARANĪ

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Abstract

The Rīhla of the famous Moroccan Ibn Baṭṭūta describes his travels, which led him through the whole Islamic world and beyond that to the South Seas and China, in an elaborate and rousing way: different people and their mannerisms, famous metropolises, the flora and fauna of distant territories and, last but not least, his adventures on the road. All this made the Rīhla, besides its being an entertaining and enthralling text, one of the main sources on the relatively poorly documented Islamic World of the 14th century. It retained this status until today. The fact that over the years more and more forgeries and plagiarisms could be proven to Ibn Baṭṭūta has not principally altered the approach to regard this text as an authentic travelogue as long as no opposite is definitively proven. This article deals with the issue of what one needs to write a travelogue; this is, besides writing skill and imaginativeness, information. It focuses on the question where this information comes from or, to get to the heart of it, whether one needs to have travelled. The subject of this study is one of the most significant parts of the Rīhla, Ibn Baṭṭūta’s description of the Delhi Sultanate. If he probably never was in India, how could he have gained his vast amount of information about this distant region? The answer to this question is, as I think, the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī of the Indian court scribe Ḫiyyā’ al-Dīn Baranī.

1. The ingredients of a travelogue1

The Rīhla of Ibn Baṭṭūta and Ibn Djuzayy2 describes large parts of the then-known world between Morocco and China, which the former claims to have

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1 The following study results from a research project on Ibn Baṭṭūta conducted together with Denise Klein and Ralf Elger at the LMU München. I would like to thank Department 12 for its financial backing.

2 It is not known to what extent the Andalusian scribe Ibn Djuzayy took part in the production of the text, so the authorship must be imputed to both. In the further course of this article, I will simply use Ibn Baṭṭūta, when the author-team is meant.
travelled for almost a quarter of a century. Besides these territories and their inhabitants, it is the author himself who acts as a central part of the story; the itinerary is interwoven with countless references to Ibn Battūta’s adventures on the road and the miracles he saw. After coming to light in Europe in the 19th century, this travelogue was soon regarded as a treasure for the relatively poorly documented Islamic World of the 14th century, and beyond.

However, it has been shown that Ibn Battūta copied considerable parts of his Rihla from other sources. The voyage to Bulgar for example cannot have taken place;3 his presence in Constantinople and China is at least up for discussion4. Thanks to the travelogue of the Moroccan Muḥammad al-ʿAbdārī, even the source for his plagiarized description of Palestine is known.5 The text most intensively used by Ibn Battūta is, as far as we know, the Rihla of Ibn Djubayr: around 250 pages concerning Egypt, Syria, the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq are based on this travelogue.6 A quite recent study determined al-ʿUmarī and al-Ḵawāṁī as sources used especially for descriptions of Anatolia and Lebanon.7 This list could be continued.

Nevertheless, such knowledge has not altered the approach of science towards the Rihla of Ibn Battūta. As long as plagiarism is not explicitly proven, his status as an eyewitness is not affected. This applies especially to the passages concerning India, the region Ibn Battūta claims to have lived in the longest, and that he describes in most detail.8 This approach is based on two factors: on the one hand, as Conermann says for example, there are no earlier sources on the Delhi Sultanate, from which Ibn Battūta could have adopted his information. For this reason, we may take Ibn Battūta at his word.9 On the other hand he concludes: “Die Aussagen in der “Rihla” werden zum größten Teil von den zeitgenössischen (und späteren) persischen Quellen bestätigt.”10

Is all this sound? Three questions arise:

3 JANICSEK, 1929.
6 MATTOCK, 1918. Conermann lists more of Ibn Battūta’s de facto and possible sources, see: CONERMANN, 1993:12–24.
7 ELGER, 2008. I would like to thank Ralf Elger, who made his still unpublished article accessible to me.
8 The events he did not witness himself, Ibn Battūta claims, were told him by Kamāl al-Dīn b. al-Burḥān al-Ḡuznawī, the kāfī of Delhi, see: Gibb, 1971:657.
10 CONERMANN, 1993:3.
1. Are there really no earlier works *Ibn Battûta* could have drawn upon? I think there are, and the parallels between the *Rīḫla* and the works of Rashīd al-Dīn and al-ʿUmarī have been pointed out before.11

2. Do the later works on the Delhi Sultanate confirm *Ibn Battûta*’s statements because they come from the same source as the one used by him?

3. A somewhat problematic question, and the one I will discuss here, concerns the only contemporary work, the *Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī* of the Indian court scribe Ǧīyāʾ al-Dīn Baranī. Could *Ibn Battûta* have known this chronicle? Can it be regarded as a possible source?

A first version of this chronicle was finished in 1355, the same year that, according to *Ibn Ḥuzayy*, saw the completion of the *Rīḫla*, while a second version was completed shortly before Baranī’s death in 1357.12 For that reason it was hitherto excluded from the range of possible sources. However, such elaborate chronicles were not written in one go but developed over many decades, in some cases even generations. Baranī names his father, his grandfather and men that held important positions under sultan Ghīyāth al-Dīn Balaban13 as his informants.14 It can be assumed that they also produced written documents, which Baranī could include in his chronicle. For that reason at least the first chapters of the *Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī* shall be considered a possible source for *Ibn Battûta*’s description of India.

In the end, the question of whether *Ibn Battûta* was able to attain a copy of the Indian chronicle cannot be answered. As he alone testifies his knowledge of the Persian language, I assume that he needed an Arabic translation or someone to translate the Persian text for him. He and Baranī completed their works almost simultaneously, so that the transfer of the chronicle would have had to take place very quickly. As this cannot be proved at the moment, these considerations have to remain on a hypothetic level. Of course, it cannot be excluded that a copy of the *Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī* was available relatively soon in the western Arab lands, most likely in Cairo, and that someone was able to read

11 Spies for example pointed out the parallels between *Ibn Battûta*’s and al-ʿUmarī’s Indian passages, see: *IBN FA’DULLAH AL-ʿUMARI*, 1943:8f.
13 While today the name of this sultan is also vocalized as Balban [see, for example: HARDY, 1965:268] *Ibn Battûta* vocalized it as Balaban [see: GIBB, 1971:633]. I will follow him here.
14 Baranī, 1862:25, 127.
it. Such a copy must be searched for. This is an all the more remunerative task because the texts are very similar to one another. Additionally, one has to keep in mind that Ibn Battūta copied parts of his report on India from yet other sources. Thus, the suspicion of plagiarism does not concern Baranī alone, or, in other words: Baranī would not be the sole piece of evidence that Ibn Battūta probably never was in India, but one piece amongst several.

One part of the Riḥla especially suggests a chronicle as Ibn Battūta’s source: the compendium of the history of the Delhi Sultanate.15 Chapters XI to XII of Gibb’s translation do not match the rest of the text; they stick out as a foreign body. They contain information typically found in chronicles, and their textual structure also reminds one of that genre. As the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī covers exactly the same period as the Riḥla, it is conceivable that this work is the sought-after source. There are yet more passages in Ibn Battūta’s text with the stylistic shape of a chronicle. Thus it must be considered whether this was a mere literary model or whether the structure of the source was adopted along with its contents, that is, if, for example, in the case of the passages concerning Čīngiz Khān a chronicle could be the source.16

If Ibn Battūta planned to write a seemingly authentic Indian travelogue without having been there, he would have extracted the hard facts from Baranī’s text first of all. Later on, he would have been able to forge the accessory parts and his personal experiences or borrow them from other sources. The hard facts are, besides the historic course of events, the names of contemporary rulers and governors that Ibn Battūta refers to regularly, and Persian terms and sentences that are cited in the Riḥla. If there appear to be a significant number of parallels in the description of the historic course of events in both texts, I shall analyze whether they run on a specific framework. Concerning Ibn Battūta’s Arabic sources, very detailed studies have already been undertaken; even his restructuring of syntax in order to conceal plagiarism has been detected.17 To identify such methods will be far more difficult with a Persian text. However, if Ibn Battūta had extracted information from Baranī’s text, one can expect that he acted according to a certain model, relocating, reinterpreting and reweighing specific kinds of information, and leaving others out.

Besides the hard facts are the soft ones that make the Riḥla appear animated and authentic. For that reason, these were typically quoted if the aim was to

17 Conermann lists the studies in detail, see: CONERMANN, 1993:14.
defend Ibn Battūta’s assertions. But particularly for those kinds of narrative elements a residence in India is by no means a precondition. Unlike battles and conquests, personal experiences, miraculous stories and the description of saintly men can easily be forged or copied. They are independent of time and place. They may have been extracted from an Indian source, but need not have been. Furthermore, they may occur more than once. For example, sheikh Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Murshidī, whom Ibn Battūta met in Alexandria, is quite similar to sheikh Maḥmūd al-Kubbā from Delhi. Both of them possess the same ability as Śīdī Mawlā, whose description can be found in the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī:19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ibn Battūta</th>
<th>Ibn Battūta</th>
<th>Diyā’ al-Dīn Baranī</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... the pious shaikh Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Murshidī, who lived a life of devotion in retirement from the world, and bestowed gifts from the divine store, for he was indeed one of the great saints who enjoy the vision of the unseen. ... He had a hermitage there in which he lived alone, with neither servant nor companion. He was sought by the amīrs and ministers of state, and parties of men in all ranks of life used to visit him every day, and he would serve them all with food. Every man of them would express his desire to eat some flesh or fruit or sweetmeat at his cell, and to everyone he would bring what he had desired, though that was often out of season.20</td>
<td>Amongst them is the pious and learned shaikh Maḥmūd al-Kubbā; he is one of the great saints and the people assert he is able to draw on the resources of creation, because to all outward seeming he has no property of his own, yet he supplies food to all comers and makes gifts of gold and silver coins and garments. ... I saw him many times and profited from his blessed power.21</td>
<td>Śīdī Mawlā was a dervish... He had peculiar knowledge of the ṣūfī-religion (ṭarīḥā) and in expenditure (of food) and in feeding he was unequalled ... he had no housemaids and servants and indulged no passion. He accepted nothing from no one yet spent so much that it caused astonishment to the people and a multitude of the people said that Śīdī Mawlā has the knowledge of magic.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 Netton describes Ibn Battūta’s belief in miracles, see: NETTON, 1984.
19 When citing the Riḥla, I use the translation by H.A.R. Gibb. The quotations of the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī are my own translation.
The compendium of the history of the Delhi Sultanate is made up of these two components: the hard and the soft facts. In this passage of his text, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa relates two to three more or less connected stories about each ruler of India. At least for all those expressing hard facts I assume I shall find counterparts in the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī. In addition, I suppose I will also find some of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s soft facts in the Indian chronicle.

not accept this, saying that none of the two sheikhs from India depicted in the Rihla with the name Muhammad has any similarities with sheikh al-Murshidi, see: Gibb, 1958:32 Fn. 84. Indeed Ibn Baṭṭūṭa does not name Sīdī Mowlā with a first name Muḥammad when describing him in Delhi, nonetheless Gibbs commentary is hard to comprehend.

22 Baranī, 1862:208.
2. The history of the rulers of Delhi in the *Riḥla* and the *Tārīḵh-i Fīrūz Shāhī*

Table 1: The Rulers of the Delhi Sultanate (from: Bosworth, 1996:300).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ruler</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>602/1206</td>
<td>Aybak, Ḥub al-Ḍīn, Malik of Hindūstan in Lahore for the Ghūrids</td>
<td>689/1290 \ Kayūmarth b. Muʿīzz al-Ḍīn Kay Qubādh, Shams al-Ḍīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>607/1210</td>
<td>Ārām Shāh, protégé, dubiously the son, of Aybak, in Lahore</td>
<td>689/1290 \ Fīrūz Shāh II Khaljī b. Yughrush, Jalāl al-Ḍīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>607/1211</td>
<td>Iltutmish b. Išām Khān, Shams al-Ḍīn, sultan in Delhi (Dihlī)</td>
<td>695/1296 \ Ibrāhīm Shāh I Qādir Khān b. Fīrūz Shāh II, Rukn al-Ḍīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>634/1236</td>
<td>Raḍīyya Begum b. Iltutmish, Jalālat al-Ḍīn</td>
<td>715/1316 \ ‘Umar Shāh b. Muḥammad Shāh I, Shīhāb al-Ḍīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>664/1266</td>
<td>Balban, Ulugh Khān, Ghiyāḥ al-Ḍīn, already viceroy (māʾib-i mamlakat) in the previous reign</td>
<td>725/1325 \ Muḥammad Shāh II b. Tughluq Shāh I, Abu ‘l-Mujāhid Ulugh Khān Jawna Ghiyāḥ al-Ḍīn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ibn Baṭṭūṭa* starts with Ḥub al-Ḍīn Aybak whom he wrongly claims conquered Delhi in the Islamic year 584 (1188/89), his successor Shams al-Ḍīn Lalmish and the latter’s children Rukn al-Ḍīn, Sulṭāna Raḍīyya and Nāṣir al-Ḍīn.23 Their description completely differs from those of the later sultans. Each is pictured

quite briefly, lacking the richness in detail for which Ibn Baṭṭūṭa is normally praised.24 Furthermore, he quotes events not mentioned in any other source and some demonstrably false25 and naming wrong dates and personal names, as Gibb has noted.26 Between Sultāna Rādiyya and Nāṣir al-Dīn, two sultans are missing in the Riḥla. Gibb says that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s informant has left out both.27 He may be right since, except for Nāṣir al-Dīn, Barānī mentions none of the predecessors of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balaban by name.28 It is only when referring to the reign of this Nāṣir al-Dīn that he records basic data: “During the period of 20 years when sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn was the ruler, sultan Balaban was his deputy.”29 Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mentions the length of the reign as well, stating also 20 years.30 When describing the sultan’s brothers and sister no dates are given. In addition to these hard facts, he relates an anecdote about this sultan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ibn Baṭṭūṭa</th>
<th>Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Barānī</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He was a pious king; he used to write copies of the Holy Book with his own hand, sell them and buy his food with the proceeds.31</td>
<td>He obtained a big part of his living expenses through the transcription of the Holy Book.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24 For example Conermann, 1993:25.
25 The anecdote of sultan Shihāb al-Dīn of Ghazna and Kuṭb al-Dīn Aybak making a fool of a group of conspirators is entertaining but not handed down elsewhere, as Gibb says, see Gibb, 1971:629 Fn. 46. Mentioning the execution of the sultan’s son Mu’izz al-Dīn Ibn Baṭṭūṭa is definitely wrong. This prince was not put to death but even became sultan later on, see: Gibb, 1971:630 Fn. 51.
26 One example of false dates quoted by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa is the year of the Muslim conquest of Delhi, which he says to have seen in the miḥrāb of the great mosque of the city. Gibbs explanation that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa was not able to see the correct date because of the height of the prayer niche is a good example for the handling of false information in the Riḥla, see: Gibb, 1971:628 Fn. 42. He also discusses the problem of an early sultan’s name having probably been handed down wrongly by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, see: Gibb, 1971:629 Fn. 47.
28 The names of the early rulers of Delhi are all mentioned in the passage concerning India in the encyclopedia of Rashīd al-Dīn, which can also be considered to be a source of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, see: Jahn, 1980:47–49.
29 Barānī, 1862:26.
31 Gibb, 1971:632. In the following tables, the citations of the Riḥla appear always in the left column, those of the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī in the right one.
Whereas Ibn Battūta generates the impression of the ineligibility of Shams al-Dīn’s children to rule in several stories, Baranī gets to the heart of it: they were very young and were not equal to the duties of rulership.\(^3\)

*Ibn Battūta* begins his detailed history of the Delhi Sultanate with Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balaban, whose description is composed of three components. First, he praises the personal dedication of this ruler to justice in his realm. He had established “The House of Safety” in which debtors and murderers could take refuge until the state had paid their debt.\(^3\) When describing sultan Shams al-Dīn, *Ibn Battūta* relates a similar anecdote.\(^3\) The whole point of both stories is the unconventional commitment of the ruler to justice and to the welfare of his subjects. In both, I found no parallels with *Baranī*’s text.

The next anecdote broaches the issue of Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s origin. When he, a smallish and ugly boy, did a favour for a šüfī in his hometown Bukhārā, the saintly man augured him his rule over Delhi: “We give you the kingdom of India.”\(^3\) Having mastered various obstacles, and only through God’s guidance, he actually became ruler of India several years later. This story of the predestination of Balaban’s rule is, as Gibb has noted, completely forged. In fact, the later sultan was a favourite slave of the sultan’s household from the beginning.\(^3\) The fact that *Ibn Battūta* reinterprets the story this way is in accordance with his affection for predestination, without which he would not even have undertaken his journey.\(^3\)

The only hard facts in the *Riḥla* on Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balaban concern his biography. All this data can be found in *Baranī*’s text:

The Sultan Balaban had two sons, one of whom was ‘The Martyr Khān’, his heir; he was governor for his father in the territory of Sind, residing in the city of Multān, and was killed in warfare with the Tatars, leaving two sons Kay Qubādh and Kay Khusrū.\(^3\)

In the year 684 the khān of Multān, who was the oldest son of sultan Balaban, his heir and mainstay (pušt wa panāh) of the state, fought at Lawhūr and Dīyūbālāpur against the accursed Tamar, the bravest dog of the dogs of Čingīz Khān. By fate and preordainment of the exalted God the khān of Multān, together with the

\(^3\) *Baranī*, 1862:26.

\(^3\) *Gibb*, 1971:633.

\(^3\) *Gibb*, 1971:630.

\(^3\) *Gibb*, 1971:633.

\(^3\) *Gibb*, 1971:635 Fn. 65.

\(^3\) *Imām Burhān al-Dīn*, whom *Ibn Battūta* met in Alexandria, told him whom he would meet in China and India in case he traveled there, see: *Gibb*, 1958:23–24.

\(^3\) *Gibb*, 1971:635.
amīrs, commanders and officers of the army, sustained martyrdom in this battle. … From this time on the khān of Multān was named Khān -i shahīd.⁴⁰

The sole difference between the texts is that, according to Baranī, only Kaykhūsraw was a son of the shahīd, whereas the father of Kayḵubād was Balaban’s second son Bughrā Khān.⁴¹

This Kayḵubād became his grandfather’s successor, naming himself Muʿizz al-Dīn. Ibn Baṭṭūta tells us enthrallingly how only sophisticated planning by the deceased sultan’s grand wezir made this possible.⁴² This story of fraud and treason is not recorded in the Ṭārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī. Both texts agree on the problem the enthronement of Kayḵubād caused, since his father was still alive:

Now his father was still alive in the land of Bengal and Laknawt, and when the news reached him he said ‘I am heir to the kingdom; how can my son succeed to the kingdom and enjoy full sovereignty in it while I am still alive?’⁴³ When sultan Muʿizz al-Dīn sat on the throne of sovereignty in Delhi, his father Bughrā Khān named himself Nāṣir al-Dīn, struck coins in Lakhnawatī and had the khutba read in his name.⁴⁴

Baranī now elaborately depicts the differences between father and son. Bughrā Khān, worried that his son was not adequately concerned with his rule, wrote many letters to him giving advice. Muʿizz al-Dīn was insightful and glad for his father’s worry, and so a meeting was arranged.⁴⁵ The Rihla lacks this contextual information, but it does record the meeting between father and son:

He therefore set out with his armies on an expedition to the capital, Dihlī, and his son also set out with his armies with the object of driving him away from it. The armies came Between son and father an agreement was made according to which sultan Muʿizz al-Dīn would come from Delhi to Awda and sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn would come from Lakhnawatī to

⁴¹ Concerning this point Baranī’s statements are somewhat inconsistent. Normally he names Kaykhūsraw a son of the shahīd [see Baranī, 1862:110, 122] and Kayḵubād a child of Bughrā Khān [see: Baranī, 1862:139]. But one time he states both have been children of Bughrā Khān [see: Baranī, 1862:120].
⁴⁴ Baranī, 1862:139.
⁴⁵ Baranī, 1862:139–40.
face to face at the town of Karā, which is on the banks of the river Gang, the same to which the Indians go on pilgrimage. Nāṣir al-Dīn camped on the bank on which Karā lies and his son the Sultan Muʿizz al-Dīn encamped on the opposite bank, with the river between them.46

Both texts delightedly assert that no bloodshed occurred between fellow Muslims, but differ in their estimation of the matter. According to Ibn Batūta it was God who gave fatherly feelings to Nāṣir al-Dīn and prevented him from demanding the throne.48 Baranī also believes the feelings of a father for his son are the reason why Nāṣir al-Dīn abstained from his claim to rule. However, it is the reason of state, rather than God, which is the crucial factor in the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī. Nāṣir al-Dīn was sure he would stain the reputation of the throne if war broke out between father and son. Thus it was agreed that Nāṣir al-Dīn should meet his son and honour him as sultan. According to Baranī he kissed the ground in front of the throne three times.49 Ibn Batūta, emphasising more clearly the claim of the father, notes that Nāṣir al-Dīn had given his kingdom to his son. However, the more interesting difference between the two texts is that, according to Ibn Batūta this incident took place on a boat in the middle of the river,50 whereas Baranī locates it on one of its banks. It is not important who is right. However, Ibn Batūta’s fascination with water has already been pointed out.51 At the end of their stories, both portray an emotional release from Muʿizz al-Dīn towards his father:

The Sultan kissed his father’s foot and made apologies to him,…52 He (Muʿizz al-Dīn) laid his eyes on the foot of the father.53

47 Baranī, 1862:140–41.
49 Baranī, 1862:142.
51 Netton, 1984:132.
53 Baranī, 1862:143.
Besides the difficulties during his enthronement, Ibn Battūta gives only one more account of Mu’izz al-Dīn: He was, as an Indian had told him, somewhat addicted to alcohol and women, which was why he lost his throne.\(^{54}\) Barānī relates the austere upbringing of the sultan under the supervision of his grandfather. When Mu’izz al-Dīn, after the death of the designated heir apparent, came to the throne so suddenly, he forgot everything he had learnt. “A heavy desire for enjoyment of life and amusement had come into the breast of this (ruler)...”\(^{55}\) The consequence of his moral conduct was an illness that made it impossible for him to hold his throne. He contracted a disease, so the Riḥla tells us, that physicians were not able to cure: one half of his body dried up.\(^{56}\) Barānī reports two symptoms of the sultan’s affliction: the first one was his bāṭin-i kharāb wa bī-āb šuḍa-yi khūd, the destruction and dehydration of his internal organs\(^{57}\), and the second laḥwa, a paralysis of his face.\(^{58}\)

Under these circumstances overthrowing his master was child’s play for Djalāl al-Dīn, one of the sultan’s amīrs. He attacked the palace of the dying sultan, killed him and ruled after him.\(^{59}\) Barānī reports the same story, with one minor difference: according to him, it was the sons of Djalāl al-Dīn who came to the palace for Mu’izz al-Dīn.\(^{60}\) Thus concerning Mu’izz al-Dīn the Riḥla only reports hard facts. To each one of these, analogies, though somewhat differently arranged and evaluated, can be found in the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī.

An eyewitness had told him of the events concerning the downfall of Mu’izz al-Dīn, says Ibn Battūta.\(^{61}\) Barānī states that from that moment on, he was an eyewitness to everything he reported.\(^{62}\) It seems to make sense, therefore, that both describe at first the character of the new sultan:

Jalāl al-Dīn was clement and upright, and it was his clemency that led him to his death, as we shall relate.\(^{63}\)

… and the second thing common to the rule of kings is force, authority and public executions (siyāsat), by means of which enemies are repelled and rebels subdued. Without it the

\(^{55}\) Barānī, 1862:128.
\(^{57}\) Barānī, 1862:166.
\(^{58}\) Barānī, 1862:171.
\(^{59}\) Gibb, 1971:638.
\(^{60}\) Barānī, 1862:172–73.
\(^{62}\) Barānī, 1862:175.
\(^{63}\) Gibb, 1971:638.
order of the ruler, who is the source of rule, is not carried out. And the scare of the ruler doesn’t come into the hearts of the subjects. Both qualities named don’t crop up at sultan Djalâl al-Dîn.64

Often they bring thieves before sultan Djalâl al-Dîn. He administers them an oath never to steal again and sets them free. He says to the attendees: I cannot kill a bound man, whom they bring before me…65

The other event the Riḥla reports concerning Djalâl al-Dîn is his murder. It took place during a meeting with his nephew in Karra at the Ganges. Ibn Baṭṭīṭa and Baranī unanimously report that Djalâl al-Dîn had marched there by force.66

He (Djalâl al-Dîn) embarked on the river in order to meet his nephew, and the latter (‘Alâ’ al-Dîn) also embarked on a second vessel, determined on murdering him, and said to his followers ‘When I embrace him, kill him.’ So when they met in the middle of the river his nephew embraced him and his nephew’s attendants killed him as prearranged, and ‘Alâ al-Dîn took possession of his kingdom and his troops.67

Sultan Djalâl al-Dîn went with two boats and a couple of noblemen and attendants towards the other bank.68

At the moment, when sultan Djalâl al-Dîn took ‘Alâ’ al-Dîn’s hand and drew him to himself, the stone-hearted traitor gave the signal. Mahmûd Sâlim, a wretched fellow of a bad family from Sâmâna, hit the sultan with a sword … Ikhtiyâr al-Dîn Hawd, an infidel of the grace and an outlaw, followed ‘The enemy subduing and the territory of the Sunni Muslims expanding’ sultan and thus threw him to the ground. He cut his head off his body and brought it, dripping of blood, to sultan ‘Alâ’ al-Dîn.69

Baranī reports these events in detail, unlike Ibn Baṭṭīṭa. The Riḥla only contains basic information. Where both texts agree is that it was Djalâl al-Dîn’s clemency that brought his death. He had stubbornly refused to heed all warnings that his nephew planned to overpower him. One of the more interesting points

64 Baranī, 1862:188–89.
65 Baranī, 1862:189.
68 Baranī, 1862:232.
69 Baranī, 1862:234–35.
here is that, once again, according to *Ibn Baṭṭūta*, the murder of the sultan took place in the middle of the river, whereas *Baranī* locates it on one of its banks.\textsuperscript{70}

What *Ibn Baṭṭūta* relates first of sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn is that he was quite interested in the pricing of the traders in his realm. Through public regulation of economy, he tried to guarantee stable prices on everyday goods for all his subjects.\textsuperscript{71} *Baranī* also describes in detail how the sultan imposed a cap on the price of grain. However, he does not regard ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s love for his subjects as his motive. The sultan had planned to muster a huge army without emptying his treasury. His advisers suggested that the soldiers could provide for their own armament if only the price of food were not so high.\textsuperscript{72}

Hereafter, *Ibn Baṭṭūta* gives personal information on every sultan, and by doing so also stresses his access to well informed, that is, high-ranking, circles. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn, for example, had problems with his wife, who made life miserable for him. He often complained to the sultan about her. However, as she was Djalāl al-Dīn’s daughter, the relationship between him and the sultan suffered as a result.\textsuperscript{73} *Baranī* also depicts these conjugal problems, and furthermore the problematic relationship between ‘Alā’ al-Dīn and his mother-in-law, the wife of Djalāl al-Dīn. Contrary to *Ibn Baṭṭūta*, *Baranī* thinks that it was not too much conversation between the two men that caused alienation but too little. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn was not able to tell his uncle about his domestic problems, and so they became estranged.\textsuperscript{74}

Furthermore the *Riḥla* tells us that ‘Alā’ al-Dīn never rode on horseback. At first, this seems to be one of the countless anecdotes of *Ibn Baṭṭūta*, but the story leading to this statement can also be found in the *Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī*. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn had a favourite nephew. *Ibn Baṭṭūta* names him Sulaymān Shāh, while *Baranī* says his name was Akat Khān. When hunting with his uncle, he thought to himself:

\textsuperscript{70} With the description of Djalāl al-Dīn’s murder at the orders of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn the genealogy of the rulers of Delhi by *Rashīd al-Dīn* ends, see: *Jahn*, 1980:50.

\textsuperscript{71} *Gibb*, 1971:640–41.

\textsuperscript{72} *Baranī*, 1862:303–08.

\textsuperscript{73} *Gibb*, 1971:639.

\textsuperscript{74} *Baranī*, 1862:221.
According to Ibn Batūta, when the sultan dismounted in order to lunch, his nephew shot an arrow at him and threw him to the ground. One of the sultan’s slaves covered him with a shield. When Sulaymān Shāh approached the sultan lying on the ground to deliver his deathblow, the sultan’s slaves told him that ‘Alā’ al-Dīn was already dead. The traitor believed them, rode to the palace of his uncle and took possession of his private rooms. When ‘Alā’ al-Dīn awoke from his faint he quickly gathered his troops. His nephew fled but was caught, brought before him and executed. Baranī records the same story, though in far more detail, as Gibb has already noted. Gibb also mentions a difference in two of the Riḥla’s manuscripts. In one, the sultan’s slave covers him with a shield, in the other with a mantle. This is of interest, because Baranī notes both of these items in one and the same story: It was winter, so ‘Alā’ al-Dīn wore a long garment and a mantle, which provided a certain protection for him. In addition to this, he had a shield for defense. However, the slave did not wear one: he was himself the shield, “There was a slave named Mānik who made himself at this place the shield of the sultan, when the new Muslims shot arrows on the sultan.” It was not until after ‘Alā’ al-Dīn was hit by several arrows that more of his slaves came to shield him. It was they who told Akat Khān that the sultan had already died. Aside from this, both stories differ only in details. According to Baranī, the usurper did not enter the palace in Delhi, but rather the sultan’s tent at his camp nearby. Also, Akat Khān was not brought before ‘Alā’ al-Dīn after his capture, but was killed immediately. The fact that Ibn Batūta’s traitor entered the palace in the capital instead of a tent, and was executed under the eyes of his uncle he himself had planned on killing makes the story more rousing than Baranī’s, but does not alter it substantially.

Regarding Ibn Batūta’s two versions, several questions remain to be answered. Do they differ in more than this point? Are there even more variants

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76 Baranī, 1862:273.
79 Gibb, 1971:641 Fn. 86.
80 Baranī, 1862:273.
81 Baranī, 1862:273–75.
in the thirty known manuscripts? In order to shed light on these issues, a comparison of all copies is necessary – a task that has yet to be undertaken. This is a pressing task, which could also shed new light on the matter of plagiarism.

When the death of the sultan was imminent, the struggle for succession began among his sons. Now Ibn Battûta lists the names of all princes for the first time. Until now he had only recorded the successor to the throne, whose brothers were of no importance to his story anyway. The names of the sultan’s sons are all to be found in Baranî’s text, as is to be expected in a chronicle. ‘Alâ’ al-Dîn’s wife, Ibn Battûta reports, tried to bring her son Khîdr Khân to the throne with the help of his uncle Sandjîar. But the grand vezîr Malik Nâyib got wind of the plan and informed the sultan, who had Sandjîar killed, and locked up his son at the fortress of Gâliyûr. Shortly after the death of ‘Alâ’ al-Dîn, Malik Nâyib made his youngest son, Shîhâb al-Dîn, the new sultan. Baranî records much the same story; the differences are of no great relevance. For example, he names the brother-in-law of the sultan Alp Khân. Again, he judges this event differently from Ibn Battûta. He blames Malik Nâyib for the imprisonment of the heir apparent, whereas in the Rîhla Sandjîar is the culprit. He names the fortress Gawîlîr, but it is apparently the same place mentioned by Ibn Battûta.

Having mastered the struggle with his brothers, an event described identically by Ibn Battûta and Baranî, Mubârak Khân became sultan, adopting the name Kûth al-Dîn. His first official act was to send someone to kill his blinded brothers imprisoned at the fortress of Gawîlîr. The differences in both stories are marginal. According to Ibn Battûta, only Khîdr Khân panicked before the hangman, while his brothers stayed brave; reading Baranî, all of them were fearful:

When they came to execute Khîdr Khân he was terror-stricken and aghast. Shâdî Khân headed for Gawîlîr and killed these intimidated blinded.

82 For signatures and whereabouts of the known manuscripts see: Ouasti, 2006:90–91.
84 See Baranî, 1862:240. The only son named in the Rîhla, whom Baranî doesn’t list, is Abû Bakr Khân.
86 Baranî, 1862:368–72.
87 Gibb, 1971:643; Baranî, 1862:373–77. In the course of these events Malik Nâyib was killed in his bed. While Baranî used the correct Persian word khûrmaqâh or al-khurmaqâh, Ibn Battûta writes khûrmaqâh or al-khurmaqâh.
89 Baranî, 1862:393.
In addition to the enthronement of Ḳūṭb al-Ḏīn, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa records only his death, as he had done with former sultans. This passage is a suitable example to show the parallels between the Riḥla and the Tārīkhi Fīrūz Shāhī. Barānī records these events in significantly more detail than Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and arranges the single narrative elements in a different way; nonetheless, we read exactly the same stories.

Ḵūṭb al-Ḏīn had an attendant named Khusraw Khān, who meant the world to him and whom he allowed to do anything he wanted. Even when he was accused of an attempted coup, the sultan stood by him unquestioningly. According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, Ḳūṭb al-Ḏīn addressed his distrustful advisors; according to Barānī, he directly addressed Khusraw Khān himself. The statement in both cases is the same:

Let him do as he pleases.90 If the whole world is upside down and all my advisers talk badly about you with one voice, I am still so in love with you that I will sacrifice all of them for one strand of your hair.91

Having become self-confident following this assurance, Khusraw Khān, who was of Indian origin, decided to establish his own power base. According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, he pleaded the case of a group of Indians, who came from his home province and planned to accept Islam, to the sultan.92 In Barānī’s texts he articulates his desire in a straightforward manner: the sultan may allow him to bring some of his relatives from Bahlawāl and Gudjarāt to court in order to join him.93 After Khusraw Khān succeeded in persuading the sultan to give him his own key to the palace gates, his followers could even enter at night without being checked by the guards. At this part of the story, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and Barānī agree that this was possible only through a lie.94 Hereafter, the narrations of both run parallel. One night the assassins entered the palace and hurried onto the roof, where Ḳūṭb al-Ḏīn used to sleep in summertime. Between them and the sultan there was only Ḳāḍī Ḫūṣyā’ al-Ḏīn, named Ḳāḍī Khān.

91 Barānī, 1862:406.
93 Barānī, 1862:402.
But when he stopped them from entering they assaulted and killed him. All this made a clamour at the door and the Sultan called out |‘What is there?’\(^95\) He approached ̆kādhī ̆Diyā’ ̆al-Dīn, drew a spear from under his ̆cādar, passed ̆kādhī ̆Diyā’ ̆al-Dīn and killed this inexperienced, incautious and vain Muslim on the spot. Through the murder of ̆kādhī ̆Diyā’ ̆al-Dīn uproar arose in the Hazār Sutūn. … Sultan ̆Kūṭb ̆al-Dīn asked ̆Khusraw ̆Khān: “What is this tumult?”\(^96\)

In the ̆Rihla, ̆Khusraw ̆Khān claims that he wanted to bring the Indians before the sultan. As ̆Kādhī ̆Khān refused to let them in, a quarrel arose between them.\(^97\) Baranī also makes ̆Khusraw ̆Khān lie here: In the courtyard some horses had broken out and were now tied up again. This had caused the uproar.\(^98\) Finally even ̆Kūṭb ̆al-Dīn became suspicious of the situation and tried to flee.\(^99\) Now ̆Khusraw ̆Khān let all pretence go:

As he knocked on the door Khusrū ̆Khān seized him in his arms from behind, but the Sultan was more powerful than he and bore him to the ground.\(^100\) He (Khusraw ̆Khān) reached the sultan, grasped the sultan’s hair from behind and held it tight in his hand. The sultan threw him on the ground.\(^101\)

At this moment the assassins arrived on the roof and ̆Khusraw ̆Khān directed their attention to the sultan. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and Baranī differ in what exactly he called out to them:

Here he is on top of me; kill him, …\(^102\) Look out for me!\(^103\)

At this point, the Indian conspirators killed ̆Kūṭb ̆al-Dīn and defiled his dead body. We find a characteristic difference here between the ̆Rihla and the ̆Tārīkh-i ̆Fīrūz ̆Shāhī:

\(^95\) Gibb, 1971:647.
\(^96\) Baranī, 1862:406–07.
\(^97\) Gibb, 1971:647.
\(^98\) Baranī, 1862:407.
\(^99\) The differences between the two texts are once again marginal. According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa the sultan tried to flee into the palace, whereas Baranī mentions the harem. As it lies normally inside the palace, this doesn’t make any difference whatsoever.
\(^101\) Baranī, 1862:407.
\(^103\) Baranī, 1862:408.

AS/EA LXIV•1•2010, S. 139–172
… so they killed him, cut off his head and threw it down from the roof of the palace into the courtyard.104

He cut off the head of Ḭūṯb al-Dīn. They threw the body of Ḭūṯb al-Dīn without the head from the roof of the Ḥazār Ṣutān into the courtyard of the palace.105

The end of Ḭūṯb al-Dīn is a good example of the nature of the discrepancies between the two texts: interchanged names, locations, or now and then a body part: nevertheless the course of events remains almost entirely the same.

Apart from these events, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa reports almost nothing of Khusraw Khān. Barānī does not even dedicate a chapter to him, surely due to his Indian descent which he mentions over and over again.106 At this point, Muḥammad b. Tughluk Khān, the sultan reigning when Ibn Baṭṭūṭa claims to have been in India, appears in both texts for the first time. He was held hostage at the court of Khusraw Khān in order to make his father politically docile. But one day he fled and joined his father, who shortly thereafter ended the Indian interregnum on the throne of Delhi. Here, another difference between the Riḥla and the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī becomes tangible for the first time. Both texts record the flight of Khusraw Khān’s hostage, but in the Riḥla it is expressed in a far more entralling way. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa tells us that Muḥammad b. Tughluk Khān used a clever trick in order to escape,107 while according to Barānī he just rode away.108

The more their histories of India proceed, the easier it is to discern the way in which both texts resemble each other. They consist of a framework of core statements, to which Ibn Baṭṭūṭa adds anecdotes, personal experiences and general background information. These kinds of narrative elements do not normally appear in Barānī’s text. But to every single one of the core statements – the hard facts of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s travelogue – analogies can be found in the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī.

At first, Khusraw Khān sent his brother Khān-i Khānān against Tughluk Khān. Because the sultan’s brother was quite inexperienced, he stood no chance against this skilled warrior:

105 Barānī, 1862:408.
108 Barānī, 1862:414.
The Sultan sent his brother Khân-i Khânân to engage them but they inflicted on him a crushing defeat; his army passed to their side and Khân-i Khânân went back to his brother, his officers having been killed and his treasuries and his possessions captured.109

Right at the first attack Ghâzî Malik (Tughluk Khân) shattered the army of the unbelievers. … The tents and standards of the brother of the renegade Khusraw Khân, the elephants, horses and the treasure, which Khusraw Khân had sent to his brother, all fell into the hands of Ghâzî Malik.110

In the Riḥla, Tughluk Khân headed for Delhi immediately, whereas Baranî first records the events leading to the upcoming conflict in detail and the panic that struck Khusraw Khân. When he heard of the coming of his enemy, the sultan moved out of the city to await him:

Khusraw Khân, astonished and distraught, with his disastrous amîrs, Barwârân and Hindus, who had become his backers and fomenters, came out of Sirî into the plain of Hawd-i ‘alâ ‘î, …112

Khusraw Khân opened the royal treasury and distributed all the gold and money inside to his soldiers without weighing or counting it, as Ibn Baṭṭûta emphasizes.113 Baranî states that Khusraw Khân was so afraid the money might fall into the hands of Tughluk Khân that he had not left a single dâng or diram in the treasury.114 Then the fighting began. Ibn Baṭṭûta praises the great bravery of the Indians in battle, due to which they succeeded in plundering Tughluk Khân’s camp. Baranî also reports this event, but one will never find praise for Indians, regardless of whether they are converts or still Hindus, in his chronicle. Many Muslim soldiers, he tells us, had taken the money and gone home, because they refused to fight against Tughluk Khân. When one of the sultan’s Hindu amîrs saw that all was over, he fled. On his flight he accidentally passed Tughluk Khân’s camp and plundered it.115

Then Tughluk Khân, together with his last and most experienced stalwarts, attacked the centre of Khusraw Khân’s army. In the Târîkh-i Fīrûz Shâhî this

112 Baranî, 1862:417.
114 Baranî, 1862:418.
115 Baranî, 1862:418–19.
looks like a tactical decision, to spare one’s elite troops until the crucial part of the battle. In the Riḥla this story sounds more enthralling, as once again Ibn Battīṭa uses suspense; Tughluq Khān stood at the edge of a crushing defeat when, out of total desperation, he and 300 of his oldest followers attacked Khusraw Khān himself and finally drove him into defeat.\footnote{116 GIBB, 1971:651.}

Khusraw Khān was separated from his men, fled from the battlefield on his own and hid away:

He took to flight, then dismounted, put off his outer garments and arms, keeping only a single shirt on, and let his hair loose upon his shoulders in the manner of the Indian faqīrs, and went into a grove of trees in that neighbourhood.\footnote{117 GIBB, 1971:651.}

It was there he was finally caught. Once again the reader is more fascinated by Ibn Battīṭa’s story of how Tughluq Khān’s men found out about Khusraw Khān’s hideout,\footnote{119 The story of how Khusraw Khān gave his ring to a trader in exchange for something to eat, has some similarities with the death of Sulṭāna Ṣadiyya as Ibn Battīṭa recorded it. There also it has been the fugitive’s ring that blew up his cover, see: GIBB, 1971:632.} whereas Baranī just states that they did. He was treated well before execution. Baranī does not record his treatment in confinement but we may be sure that he would have described eventual cruelties against the Indian traitor in all detail. That Tughluq Khān had Khusraw Khān’s body thrown from the roof of the palace in order to avenge ʿUtb al-Ḥānī is not mentioned by Baranī.

When both texts describe how Tughluq Khān tried to restore order in the war-shaken kingdom, once again the Riḥla is more animated:

He returned from Tilpat and came into the vicinity of the garden of Malik Shādī-yi ‘alī’, who was the old wālī of his. There he hid and stayed in this garden the whole night.\footnote{118 BARANĪ, 1862:420.}
… and put the jurist ‘Obaid to death. He gave orders also for the execution of Malik Kāfūr the muhrdār; a stake with a sharpened end was fixed in the ground for him and was driven into his neck till its point came out of his side as he was impaled on it head downwards, …¹²⁰

Sultan Qhiyāth al-Dīn held a public audience in the plain of Sīrī. They staked ‘Ubayd Shā‘īr, the muhrdār Kāfūr, and the other insurgents alive.¹²¹

*Ibn Battūta* even depicts eerie details, whereas *Barānī* often only states names, dates and events.

The last sultan *Ibn Battūta* writes about in his travelogue is Muḥammad b. Tughluḵ. In contrast to all the preceding sultans he does not record every event under this sultan’s rule in context, but instead lists a multitude of independent incidents, most of which he claims to have experienced in person. This change in narrative structure implies that the author no longer carries out a historical review. Thinking this through leads us once again to the question under discussion: should we believe *Ibn Battūta*’s statements? In any case, *Barānī* changes his narrative structure at the beginning of Muḥammad b. Tughluḵ’s rule in exactly the same way.

The story of the origin of the ruling sultan, *Ibn Battūta* points out here, was told to him by sheikh Rukn al-Dīn. It was this man who also told him the name Muḥammad b. Tughluḵ wore before his enthronement; the name is also recorded by *Barānī*:

... and appointed his son, who is the present Sultan of India, as master of his horse. The latter was named Jawna and on becoming king took the name of Muḥammad Shāh.¹²²

On the whole *Ibn Battūta* is quite sympathetic towards Muḥammad b. Tughluḵ, far more so than *Barānī*. One of this sultan’s actions, which he criticizes, is the destruction of Delhi. The description of this event in the *Rihla* consists of four statements. They can all be found, in a somewhat different order, in the *Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī* also. The first one addresses the resettlement of the inhabitants of Delhi into the new capital:

¹²¹ Barānī, 1862:449.
¹²³ Barānī, 1862:411.
..., he commanded them to move out of the city and go to Dawlat Ābād. They sent the inhabitants together with their entourage and following, wives and children, slaves and maids on the way.

..., when they reached Diyūgīr, ...

After all residents were expected to have left the city, Muḥammad b. Tughluḳ gave the order to kill everyone who remained:

(They destroyed the city) … in such a way that in the inhabited parts of the city, in the palaces and suburbs not even a dog and a cat remained.

Once again it is the same narrative imagery of the total destruction of the city that appears in both texts and, as usual, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa describes events in more detail and with more cruelty than Baranī does. When he had laid the city in ruins, Muḥammad b. Tughluḳ started to regret his actions. He tried to repopulate the city with people from other provinces. This plan failed due to the dimensions of Delhi:

It (Delhi) became equal to Cairo and Bagh-
dad.

But it is not only the description of the course of historic events under this sultan’s rule which runs parallel in the Rihla and the Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī. Even for stories to which Ibn Baṭṭūṭa alludes only casually there are analogies in Baranī’s chronicle. An example is provided by a story about the affliction of the sultan:

125 Baranī, 1862:474.
127 Baranī, 1862:474.
129 Baranī, 1862:474.
When the Sultan reached the land of Tiling on his way to engage the Sharīf in the province of Maʿbar, he halted at the city of Badrakūt, ... At that moment a pestilence broke out in his army and the greater part of them perished;¹³⁰ While on his way back to Dawlat Ābad the Sultan fell ill, the rumour of his death was bruited amongst the people ...¹³¹

Having compared the biographies of the rulers of Delhi in both texts, it can be stated that nearly all of the hard facts, and also some of the soft ones, in Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s Rihla could be found in the Tārikh-i Fīrūz Shāhī. Assuming that he had a copy of the Indian chronicle and was able to use it, one has good reason to answer the question of whether Ibn Baṭṭūṭa must have been in India in order to write his travelogue in the negative.

3. The person Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in the Indian passages

While comparing both works, there are three facts which attract attention. These appear especially where the two texts seem to differ at first sight.

The most important difference is that the Tārikh-i Fīrūz Shāhī contains no self-portrayal of its author,¹³³ whereas in his Rihla Ibn Baṭṭūṭa plays the major part. He describes his personal experiences in India again and again, which is generally seen as a proof of his presence there. But can such experiences not be forged or copied? Many of these accounts run along the same pattern. First, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa relates something general about a person he met, usually a sultan or grand wezir. Then he offers a concrete example of that person’s behaviour and finally he links a personal experience to it. In Baranī’s text, analogies to the first two steps can be found, but understandably there is no counterpart to the third. Thus, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa allegedly witnessed the piety of sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn:

¹³² Baranī, 1862:481.
¹³³ Baranī appears just a few times in his text and even there he plays no important part of it, see: Baranī, 1862:25, 48, 168, 175, 504, 507, and 517.
He was a pious king.\textsuperscript{134}…; he used to write copies of the Holy Book with his own hand, sell them and buy his food with the proceeds.\textsuperscript{135}

The qāḍī Kamāl al-Dīn showed me a Qur‘ān copied by him in an elegant and well-executed writing.\textsuperscript{136}

Another example in which \textit{Ibn Baṭṭūṭa} arranges his personal experience in exactly the same way is his depiction of Muḥammad b. Tughlūk’s cruelty:

\textit{…, the Sultan was far too free in shedding blood.}\textsuperscript{139}

The public punishment of Muslims and the killing of true believers became his custom and nature. So many scholars, sheikhs, sayyids, sūfīs, wandering dervishes, scribes and soldiers were executed on his order.\textsuperscript{142}

It was but seldom that the entrance to his palace was without a corpse …\textsuperscript{140}

\textit{… and I used often to see men being executed at his gate and [their bodies] left to lie there.}\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{134} GIBB, 1971:632.
\textsuperscript{135} GIBB, 1971:632.
\textsuperscript{136} GIBB, 1971:632.
\textsuperscript{137} BARANI, 1862:26.
\textsuperscript{138} BARANI, 1862:26.
\textsuperscript{139} GIBB, 1971:696.
\textsuperscript{140} GIBB, 1971:696.
\textsuperscript{141} GIBB, 1971:696. Not only in the Indian passages had \textit{Ibn Baṭṭūṭa} structured his personal experiences in this way. When describing Lebanon he had used the same three steps: The first statement is general, when he says: the Lebanon Mountains are among the most fertile mountains in the world. Then he gets more concrete: in it are to be found all manner of fruits and recluses. Then he records a personal experience: I myself saw there several saintly men. The first two elements of this story can be found almost parallel in \textit{al-Kazwīnī’s “Kitāb ‘adjā’ib al-makhālīkā”}, the third, of course, not. For this and more examples on \textit{Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s analogies to al-Kazwīnī} see ELGER, 2008.
\textsuperscript{142} BARANI, 1862:465.
\textsuperscript{143} BARANI, 1862:466.
Ibn Baṭṭūṭa places his personal experiences in yet another way, whilst still not necessarily having had to have been present. He narrates that he was told by ḵādi Zayn al-Dīn Mubārak how Ḫūṭb al-Dīn sent one of his amīrs to the fortification of Gāliyūr to kill his brothers who were incarcerated there. The princes’ names and the fact that they reacted in panic can also be found in Barānī’s text. In this case the personal experience that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa claims to have had was his meeting in Mecca the mother of one of those murdered. The Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī records that Ḫūṭb al-Dīn ordered the mothers of the princes to be brought to Delhi. Thus Ibn Baṭṭūṭa would know that they were not kept at the fortress anymore and pilgrimages after the death of a son would not have been unusual in the 14th century Islamic world.

A report of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa from Multān shall serve as a last example:

I have seen inscribed on the maqṣūra of the congregational mosque at Multān, which was built at his orders, ‘I fought with the Tatars twenty-nine times and drove them in defeat, whence I gained the title of al-Malik al-Ghāzī.’

Whether that sentence was in fact located on the mosque cannot be verified, since the early mosques in Multān did not outlast the centuries. In principle, inscriptions of the benefactor in the maqṣūra are not unusual, which is why Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s report might be true. But the crucial information about the battles of Tughluḵ Shāh against the Mongols also appears in Barānī’s text.

The second aspect of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s self-portrayal is of the social stratum within which he moved. His alleged access to Delhi’s highest circles is striking. From sultan to grand wezir to the sultan’s mother, he continuously met the dignitaries of the state. But do we need to believe that every high-ranking person allowed him access at once, or could he have derived the information about them from the Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī? A good example pertaining to this is his description of a campaign of Muḥammad b. Tughluḵ in the mountains of Karā-

145 Barānī, 1862:393.
147 Barānī, 1862:416.
The stories of Ibn Battūta and Barānī resemble each other in the way already described. First, both tell how widely extended those mountains are:

This is a great range of mountains extending for a distance of three months’ journey; ... the mountains of Farādīl, which obstruct the way between the kingdom of India and the kingdom of China.

They then portray the course of the enterprise: the army of Delhi could not cope with the environment, the more so since their adversaries cut off the routes over the passes. The greater part of the soldiers was killed or captured. The treasures they had with them were looted by the Hindus. The appraisal that this defeat limited Delhi’s capacity to act with regard to foreign affairs in the long term can be found in the Rihla as well as in the Tārīkh-i Fīrūz Shāhī. The descriptions differ only where it comes to those who brought the news of the defeat to the sultan:

... and out of the army only three of the amīrs escaped, their commander Nukbiya, Badr al-Dīn the malik Dawlat-Shāh, and a third whose name I do not recall. From such a chosen army that has become unshaken (only) ten horsemen returned.

It is not possible to verify who actually succeeded in escaping from the mountains. But the fact that Ibn Battūta names high-ranking amīrs, where Barānī speaks of common soldiers, matches the pattern of the Rihla. The more so as Ibn Battūta suggests a certain connection to them by giving their names.

Another high-ranking personality that takes a prominent place in the Rihla is Muḥammad b. Tughluq’s mother. But Ibn Battūta’s obtaining information about her does not require an actual meeting. First, he describes her generosity when founding and maintaining hospices. But that was not an unusual activity for sultans’ mothers. The account of how she lost her eyesight seems somewhat fantastic. The only hard facts in the Rihla are her name, Makhdūma Djahān,

149 The printed version of Barānī’s text, edited by Sayyid Ahmad Khān Śāhib, spells Farādīl [see: BARANĪ, 1862:477]. One of the manuscripts has the correct name.
150 GIBB, 1971:713.
151 BARANĪ, 1862:477.
154 BARANĪ, 1862:478.
and the excellent relationship she had with her son. Both can be found in Baranî’s text.\(^{156}\) In any case, reading this chapter gives one the impression that it is not Makhdûma Diyahân who is in the limelight, but her guest.

There is a third aspect in which the stories of the Rîhla and the Târîkh-i Firûz Shâhî differ even if they contain exactly the same information. This seems to be an expression of Ibn Bâṭtûtâ’s personality too. In the Rîhla religion plays a central role, while in the Târîkh-i Firûz Shâhî it does not. Baranî limits himself to polemics against Hindus converted to Islam; however, this seems to have political reasons rather than religious ones. Ibn Bâṭtûtâ on the other hand, emphasises religion the most, as can already be seen in his many stories of holy men and his adoration of kâdis.\(^{157}\) Besides the direct references to religious experiences one finds hints of it even where religion is not the ultimate matter; while Baranî mentions the governor of a city Ibn Bâṭtûtâ records its kâdi. If one wants to act on the assumption that he adopted his information from the Târîkh-i Firûz Shâhî, then he changed its basic tenor into a religious one. The often quite subtle differences between both texts emerge only with intensive reading and can seldom be illustrated by concrete examples. The conflict between Mu’izz al-Dîn and Nâsîr al-Dîn for instance was, according to Ibn Bâṭtûtâ, settled by God, whereas Baranî sees reason and fatherly love as responsible for the amicable arrangement.\(^{158}\)

That this reinterpretation is not invariably without problems is shown by Ibn Bâṭtûtâ’s characterisation of Muḥammad b. Tughluk. Both authors agree that he tended towards cruelty now and then. Furthermore Ibn Bâṭtûtâ highlights his munificence.\(^{159}\) Baranî does not allude to this directly but records at regular intervals monetary presents from the sultan.\(^{160}\) In one aspect of this sultan’s personality they differ completely. Ibn Bâṭtûtâ highlights Muḥammad b. Tughluk’s preoccupation with religion: “The ceremonies of religion are strictly complied with at his court, and he is severe in the matter of attendance at prayer and in punishing those who neglect it.”\(^{161}\) At this point the Rîhla has a breakdown in logic. Ibn Bâṭtûtâ is not capable of explaining reasonably why Muḥammad b. Tughluk, though a man of faith, had Muslims and Hindus executed alike. The Târîkh-i Firûz Shâhî is more convincing here. Muḥammad b. Tughluk was just

\(^{156}\) Baranî, 1862:482.

\(^{157}\) Netton analyzed the miraculous stories of Ibn Bâṭtûtâ, see Netton, 1984:134ff.


\(^{160}\) For instance see: Baranî, 1862:482.

not a religious person but an adherent of falsafa, philosophy and the maʿkūlāt, the rational sciences.\textsuperscript{162} For this reason it made no difference to him of which belief the executed were. Once again we may ask ourselves if both authors simply had differing views on the sultan or if one of them knowingly shook up Muḥammad b. Tughluṭ’s beliefs. In this case especially it has to take authority that Ǧīyāʾ al-Ｄīn Baranī was a court scribe of Muḥammad b. Tughluṭ who had regular personal access to him. Unlike in the case of Ibn Battūṭa, this fact is not attested only by Baranī himself.

4. Stories in the Riḥla without analogies in the Tārīkh-i Fīruz Shāhī

A good deal of Ibn Battūṭa’s information cannot be found in the Tārīkh-i Fīruz Shāhī. This may be seen as proof of the authenticity of the Riḥla but it is not inevitable, since they are all so-called soft facts. Furthermore, there is a certain uniformity in this kind of information as well as in its procurement. The reason is that the Riḥla and the Tārīkh-i Fīruz Shāhī form parts of different literary genres. A chronicle serves the purpose of archiving the historical course of events and its interpretation according to the reason of state. The consignee is a high ranking person, to whom the chronicle is dedicated; legibility and suspense are not major concerns. A travelogue on the other hand is a kind of popular fiction. Indeed, the Riḥla is dedicated to a high ranking person, too – the ruler of Morocco; but its real audience is not that one man but a broad spectrum of literate readers.\textsuperscript{163}

It has already been mentioned that Ibn Battūṭa makes regular use of a suspense curve in order to let his narrative appear more lively. In addition to that we find far more surprising, fantastical and figurative stories in his text. For instance one about ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn: early in his life he had the ambition of becoming king but lacked the money to achieve his goal. All he had was what he gained in his wars against the infidels. One day when he was on a campaign in the district of Duwayḥīr, his horse struck a stone with its hoof. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn dug up the

\textsuperscript{162} Baranī, 1862:465. Baranī describes at length Muḥammad b. Tughluṭ’s affectation for Persian literature and poetry. He also delineates the extensive conversations the sultan had with his advisers about philosophy and logic, see: Baranī, 1862:463–65.

\textsuperscript{163} That there can be no doubt about the intention of the Riḥla is already shown by the foreword of Ibn Djuzayy: “… a narrative which gave entertainment to the mind and delight to the ears and eyes, …” [Gibb, 1958:6.]
ground around the stone and found an immense treasure, which he distributed among his soldiers.\textsuperscript{164} There is of course no analogy to this story in the \textit{Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī}, just the underlying hard facts are recorded by Barānī: ‘Alā’ al-Dīn kept the enormous booty, which fell into his hands at Dīyūgīr, for himself instead of giving it to the sultan.\textsuperscript{165}

The execution of revolutionaries is also recorded in great and bloody detail by \textit{Ibn Baṭṭūṭa}. The Indians had elephants which were trained especially for this purpose:

These elephants which kill men have their tusks fitted with pointed blades of iron resembling ploughshares, with edges like knives. ... If he orders him to cut the victim in pieces the elephant cuts him in pieces with those blades; if he orders him to be left alone it leaves him lying on the ground and he is then flayed. ... I saw the dogs eating their flesh, their skins having been stuffed with straw – God preserve us.\textsuperscript{166}

Such figurative stories are not to be found in the \textit{Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī}. Barānī also does not state that elephants have been trained to kill people. He regularly mentions, however, the trampling to death of rebels and criminals by elephants.\textsuperscript{167} That these animals received some kind of training thereby seems inevitable.

Furthermore, when describing the cruelty of \textit{Muḥammad b. Tughluḵ}, \textit{Ibn Baṭṭūṭa} lists several executed and banned persons, for the most part sheikhs.\textsuperscript{168} Here he also leaves out almost no grim detail, may it be glowing iron or the Schwedentrunk. To these accounts there are no analogies in the \textit{Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī}, with one exception: Barānī records the executed sultan’s brother Mas’ūd Khān.\textsuperscript{169} This fits the assumption that stories of sheikhs are to be thought of as being independent of time and place, all the more so because in this case their way of dying is the crucial point of the story, not their name. The only person that needed to be verifiable is the brother of the sultan of India.

As to the Persian words and sentences in the \textit{Rihla I} I could find no analogies in the \textit{Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī}. Only the verb ‘imārat kardan appears in Barānī’s

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{164} Gibb, 1971:639.
\item \textsuperscript{165} Barānī, 1862:222–23.
\item \textsuperscript{166} Gibb, 1971:715–16.
\item \textsuperscript{167} Barānī, 1862:208, 212, 320, 321, 322, 448.
\item \textsuperscript{168} Gibb, 1971:695–707.
\item \textsuperscript{169} Barānī, 1862:454. However, Barānī doesn’t adore him in the way Ibn Baṭṭūṭa does, who says Mas’ūd Khān is the best-looking person he has ever seen on earth. [Gibb, 1971:696.]
\end{footnotes}
chronicle,\textsuperscript{170} with a different meaning, however. What is in any case quite surprising are the kind of Persian words Ibn Battūta uses: whilst he records his scholarly conversations with the sultan, wezirs and sheikhs, he solely cites sentences of everyday speech like “Have it repaired!” and “Have you anything more to say?”\textsuperscript{171} These are the kinds of phrases one would expect to find in a book of elementary Persian rather than in a chronicle. The task remains for academia to search for possible sources these words could have been extracted from. In particular in the archives of Cairo there should be a quantity of such books, from which scholars and diplomats of the Mamluks learned the Persian language. As long as such possible sources are not recovered and analyzed, the problem of the Persian words and sentences in the Riḥla must remain unsolved.

5. Spicing up Baranī: From chronicle to travelogue

Are Ibn Battūta’s descriptions of India based on his own personal experiences or, as I believe, extracted from the Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī? Today the question of whether the Riḥla should be regarded basically as a historic or a literary source is under debate more than ever. Criticism of his text is often regarded as criticism of him, but that is exactly the opposite of what I intend to do here. It seems to be greatly to the credit of Ibn Battūta that he converted the Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī, a lengthy chronicle in official Persian, into an enthralling, entertaining text.

Thus, while the final judgement on the famous Moroccan still cannot be passed one should, because of his many verified plagiarisms and the numerous analogies between his Riḥla and the Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī in topic and structure, at least have doubts about the authenticity of his Indian passages. All the more so because their main elements have by no means such a generally different composition from the Indian chronicle, as I had supposed. Quite to the contrary, both texts run to a large extent in parallel. Ibn Battūta could find all the hard facts he needed for the framework of this travelogue in the Tārīḵ-i Fīrūz Shāhī. To these he added the soft facts, personal experiences, stories of holy men, itineraries and information about flora and fauna. On the other hand, Baranī’s elaborations on fiscal reforms, and especially his digressions into classical Per-

\textsuperscript{170} Baranī, 1862:176, 208.
\textsuperscript{171} GIBB, 1971:759.
sia, are missing in the *Riḥla*.\textsuperscript{172} They are not a component of a travelogue and none of *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*’s Arabic readers would have had any understanding of them.

As was expected, the parallels between these texts break off at one point. Both authors depict, extremely negatively, the actions of the provincial governor ‘Azīz Khimār.\textsuperscript{173} Thereafter, *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa* travels on to China whereas *Baranī* records the end of Muḥammad b. Tughluk’s rule and that of his successor. From this point on, there are no more parallels between the texts.

A very important reason to doubt *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*’s elaborations is the fact that *Baranī* does not mention him once. According to his own statement he, the exotic from a distant land, became kādī of Delhi on a portly salary,\textsuperscript{174} was a confidant of sultan and grand wezir and was warmly welcomed by the queen-mother. Furthermore he knew a good many of the Indian sheikhs in person and was entrusted with the administration of some villages.\textsuperscript{175} A chronicler should have heard of all this. Nevertheless, nothing of it was worth the slightest reference for *Baranī*, the ever well-informed court scribe.

But despite all parallels in potential sources, *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*’s presence in India is hardly in doubt until today, in academia and beyond. The great quantity of detailed accounts for some of which the *Riḥla* is the only source balances out much scepticism.\textsuperscript{176} Nevertheless, even stories without parallels elsewhere need not inevitably be regarded as an authentication of *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*’s statements. For example, he describes a procession in Delhi, its ceremonial and its participants.\textsuperscript{177} It is to be assumed that the order in which religious and governmental dignitaries at processions in Morocco followed the sultan was not fundamentally different to the custom in India. The names of the high-ranking dignitaries recorded here by *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa* are with a few exceptions all mentioned by *Baranī* too.\textsuperscript{178} *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa* need not have been in India in order to describe this procession.


\textsuperscript{173} GIBB, 1971:762; *Baranī*, 1862:501–02.

\textsuperscript{174} GIBB, 1971:747.

\textsuperscript{175} GIBB, 1971:762.

\textsuperscript{176} Dunn for example, when praising the significance of the *Riḥla* for our knowledge of the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, seems not even to have taken into account the alternative why *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa* is the only source of certain historic events of more or less relevance; he may have fabricated them, see: *DUNN*, 1986:210 Fn. 3.

\textsuperscript{177} GIBB, 1971:664–65.

\textsuperscript{178} *Baranī*, 1862:454–55.
Had semblies’ al-Din Baran written his Tarih-i Firuz Shahi only some years earlier, it would soon have been taken into account as a possible source for Ibn Battuta’s description of the history of the Delhi Sultanate. The corresponding passages of both texts in content and structure are too similar, the discrepancies too systematic. Considering the several plagiarisms already substantiated to the famous Moroccan today and the many routes along which information could be transported in the 14th century, even now we should not exclude the Tarih-i Firuz Shahi from the body of possible sources.

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