

## ARABIC-SCRIPT SOURCES ON KAMĀL AL-DĪN BEHZĀD

At present, not one of the Arabic-script sources in Persian, Chaghatay, or Turkish provides more or less full or coherent biography of Kamāl al-Dīn Behzād. Still, some information, if scanty, about this great master of Persian miniatures has come down to us in fourteen works written in the above-noted languages between the late fifteenth and the first third of the seventeenth century. These works can be divided into three distinct groups:

1. Works by authors directly linked to the cultural and literary environment of Herat in the last quarter of the fifteenth — first third of the sixteenth century. These are *Khulāṣat al-akhbār fī bayān aḥwāl al-akhyār* (completed in 905/1499—1500), *Nāma-yi nāmī* (completed in 929/1522—23) and *Ḥabīb al-siyar fī aḥwāl afrād bashar* (completed in the third redaction in 939/1532—33) by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Khwāndamīr; *Waqā'i* or “Notes of Bābur” by Zāhir al-Dīn Bābur (d. 937/1530); *Badā'i* 'al-waqā'i' (completed in 938/1521—32) by Zayn al-Dīn Wāṣifī; *Ta'rikh-i Rashīdī* (completed in 953/1546) by Muḥammad Ḥaydar Dūghlāt.

2. Works created in Safawid Iran from the 1540s to the 1620s: *Dībācha-yi muraqqa'-i Bahrām-mīrzā* (drawn up in 951/1544—45) by Dūst Muḥammad-i Harawī; *Dībācha-yi muraqqa'-i Shāh Ṭahmāsp* (drawn up in 964/1556—57) by Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Qiṣṣakhwān; *Dībācha-yi muraqqa'-i amīr Ḥusayn-bek* (drawn up in 968/1560—61) by Mālik Daylamī; *Rawḍat al-jinān wa jannat al-janan* (drawn up in 975/1567—68) by Hāfīz Husayn Karbalā'i; *Jawāhir al-akhbār* (completed in 984/1576) by Būdāq munshī Qazwīnī; *Risāla* (completed in 1004/1596, a second redaction, *Gulistān-i hunar* was finished in India in ca. 1016/1607) by Qāḍī Aḥmad Ibrāhīmī Qumī; *Ālamārā-yi 'Abbāsī* (completed in a second redaction in 1039/1630) by Iskandar-bek munshī.

3. Works created outside of Iran proper. These include a source that is extremely suspect in its information on manuscript book artists of Iran and Central Asia, the *Manākib-i hunarwarān* (completed in 994/1586) by the Turkish author Muṣṭafā Daftarī and *Muraqqa'-i Jahāngīr* or *Muraqqa'-i Gulshan* (drawn up ca. 1020/1612) for the Great Moghūl Nūr al-Dīn Jahāngīr in India.

The most reliable information on Behzād is found in the first two groups of works noted above. What follows is

the information about Behzād that we could extract from the above-mentioned sources.

Only Qāḍī Aḥmad reports that Behzād was originally from Herat. The same author, following Būdāq Qazwīnī, tells that the artist lost both parents in early childhood and was raised (adopted into the family?) by *sayyid* Rūḥallāh, known as Mīrak-naqqāsh, *kitābdār*, first of the library of 'Alī-Shīr Nawā'i and later the library of Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bāyqarā in Herat. According to Dūst Muḥammad, Muḥammad Ḥaydar, Būdāq-munshī, and Qāḍī Aḥmad, Mīrak-naqqāsh was the teacher of Behzād. Contrary to this assertion, Muṣṭafā Daftarī names one Pīr Sayyid Aḥmad Tabrīzī as Behzād's teacher. The information provided by Persian authors about Behzād's teacher seems preferable, as the first three of the preceding were younger contemporaries of Behzād. We know that Behzād had two sisters; the son of one of them, Rustam 'Alī, arrived together with Behzād in Tabriz, while the grandson of the second, Muṣṭafā 'Alī, was a pupil of the artist (Mālik Daylamī, Iskandar-bek). However, both Būdāq-munshī and Qāḍī Aḥmad report that he was taught by his father, who took lessons from Behzād.

Khwāndamīr (*Khulāṣat* and *Ḥabīb*), Bābur, Wāṣifī, and Muḥammad Ḥaydar are unanimous in stating that it was Nawā'i who supported Behzād and became his patron, appointing him to his library, where he worked with another artist Qāsim b. 'Alī. Later, Behzād entered the staff of the Sulṭān-Ḥusayn's library; Nawā'i states (*Munsha'āt*, No. 24) that the latter built for him in the palace garden a pavilion (*hujra*) for his work, while Wāṣifī says that at that time Behzād was inseparable from his bag with tools for work, as well as drawings, “everyday scenes”, and apparently caricatures of odd-looking individuals from the Herat court. By this time, he was the author of four signed miniatures for the famed *Bustān* by Sa'dī, which he executed in 893—894/1488—89. According to Bābur, Behzād remained in Herat with Shaybānī-khān in 1507—1510. The Turkish writer Muṣṭafā Daftarī claims that the artist was with Ismā'īl Ṣafawī during the Chaldyran battle in 920/1514, but this is no more than a legend.

The sources are silent on Kamāl al-Dīn Behzād's life and whereabouts between 916—928/1510—1522. At the end of Rabī' I 928 / February 1522, the minor Ṭahmāsp left Herat, where he had spent a full 6 years (922—928/1516—1522)