



'ALĪ QĀ'ENĪ

'ALĪ QĀ'ENĪ, usually known as SOLṬĀN-'ALĪ, calligrapher active in Herat and Tabrīz during the late 9th/15th and early 10th/16th centuries. Nothing is known of his family, though his *nesba* suggests a connection with the region of Qā'en southwest of Herat. Both his calligraphic style and the texts he copied underscore his ties to the latter city. M. Bayānī suggests he studied with one of Bāysonḡor's principal calligraphers, Aẓhar Tabrīzī. A text in Solṭān-'Alī's hand states that it was copied from a work by *mawlānā* (our master) Ja'far Bāysonḡorī. Many of the texts he copied were either by Herati authors or otherwise connected with Timurid culture: the complete *Dīvān* of Jāmī, the Turkic *Dīvān* of 'Alī-Šīr Navā'ī, and Šaraf-al-dīn 'Alī Yazdī's life of Tīmūr. Writing in 896/1490-91, 'Alī-Šīr Navā'ī describes Solṭān-'Alī as an ascetic youth formerly connected with 'Abd-al-Raḡmān Jāmī. When in the latter's entourage, he concentrated on copying Jāmī's works.

Despite these strong ties to Herat, the majority of Solṭān-'Alī's known works were produced in Tabrīz for the Āq Qoyunlū rulers Ya'qūb (r. 883-96/1478-90) and Rostam (r. 898-902/1493-97). In Tabrīz Solṭān-'Alī often used the *nesba* "al-Ya'qūbī" or "al-Rostamī," but pieces signed "al-Qā'enī" are also known. It is uncertain what first drew him to Tabrīz but 'Alī-Šīr Navā'ī mentions that he spent several years in Mecca, so perhaps he passed through Tabrīz on the pilgrimage. Manuscripts and *qeṭ'as* produced for Ya'qūb Āq Qoyunlū give evidence of the latter's royal ambitions before his accession to the throne. A manuscript noted by M. Bayānī and dated to 882/1477-78 gives Ya'qūb's titlature as "Abu'l-Moẓaffar Ġāzī Šāh-e Jahān Ya'qūb." This date encompasses



both the death of Uzun Ḥasan (Ramazān/January) and the struggle between his heirs that ensued. Another manuscript copied by Solṭān-‘Alī for Ya‘qūb is dated to Jomādā I, 883/August, 1478, just a few weeks after the latter’s accession to the throne. Towards the end of his life Solṭān-‘Alī probably returned to Herat. An undated copy of ‘Alī-Šīr’s *Ġarā’eb al-ṣeġar* now in Istanbul has illustrations similar to those produced for Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bāyqarā in Herat during the 1490s. M. Bayānī’s suggestion that Solṭān-‘Alī is the scribe of the 908/1502-03 manuscript of *Jamāl o Jalāl* now in Uppsala would also place him in Herat. The time and place of Solṭān-‘Alī’s death are uncertain; a *taḍkera* gives 914/1508 as his death date. Aside from the intrinsic value of the manuscripts he copied, his chief importance lies in his transmission to western Iran, particularly Tabrīz, of the taste of Timurid Herat in both calligraphy and literature.

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