



ĀQĀ REZĀ HERAVĪ

ĀQĀ REZĀ HERAVĪ, a painter closely associated with Prince Salīm, the later Emperor Jahāngīr, during the latter's residence in Allahabad (1008-13/1599-1605). In his earliest known work Āqā Rezā's son Abu'l-Ḥasan, also a court painter, describes himself as "kāna-zād," which has been interpreted to mean that Abu'l-Ḥasan was born at the Mughal court; this would date Āqā Rezā's association with Prince Salīm as early as 997/1588-89, the year of Abu'l-Ḥasan's birth (L. Ashton, ed., *Art of India and Pakistan*, London, 1949, no. 665, p. 149). Various manuscripts of Jahāngīr's autobiography identify Āqā Rezā with Marv or Herat (*The Tūzuk-i Jahāngīr*, tr. A. Rogers, London, 1909-14, II, p. 20); Abu'l-Ḥasan describes himself as Mašhadī or *kāk-e āstān-e Rezā* "dust of the threshold of (Imam) Rezā (Walters Art Gallery Ms W. 668, fol. 45; British Museum Library, Add. 18579, fol. 41a), attributes which suggest some connection with Mašhad.

Beyond these few and somewhat contradictory facts, all that is known about Āqā Rezā can be gleaned from his paintings which fall in two principal groups: one from an album known as the *Moraqqa'-e golšan*, which was assembled for Jahāngīr between 1008/1599 and 1018/1609, and the other from a manuscript of *Anwār-e Sohaylī* in the British Museum Library (Add. 18579). Most of the *Moraqqa'-e golšan* is in the Golestān Library, Tehran, with other pages preserved in various public and private collections. Several isolated leaves signed by or attributed to Āqā Rezā may have come from other albums made for Jahāngīr, and further unsigned works have been attributed to him by modern scholars. The signed works range in date from 1001/1592 to 1012/1604;



these all bear a dedication to Prince Salīm, and the wording and arrangement of the signatures stress the artist's loyalty to and dependence on his patron. In marginal illustrations from the *Moraqqa'-e golšan* the signature often appears on a letter or book held by one of the figures, while full-page scene, are usually signed on a small boulder in the lower left portion of the painting. Āqā Režā customarily describes himself as *gōlām*, *morīd*, or *banda* (servant, disciple, or slave) with the qualifying epithet *be-eklāš* (loyal, sincere); the name of Salīm is always physically above his own. In paintings attributed to him his name appears, along the edge of the page or in a manner different from that of the signed works.

Āqā Režā painted both in pale washes or in full color. The latter mode, with its reliance on decorative surface patterns, reflects the Iranian style in which he was trained, while the former clearly represents his adaptation to the taste of the Mughal court with its interest in European subjects and conventions, especially the use of modeling and looser brushwork. If Āqā Režā was attached to Salīm's court by 997/1598, he could have witnessed some of the early experiments in copying European compositions at Akbar's court during the 990s/1580s. The circumstances of his training in Iran remain unclear but given the dependence of his style on the pictorial repertoire used during the reign of Shah Ṭahmāsp (r. 931-84/1524-76) and the fact that several painters from Ṭahmāsp's court joined the entourage of Ebrāhīm Mīrzā in Mašhad around 973-85/1565-77, it is possible that Āqā Režā studied in Mašhad with one of these Tabrīzī artists.

The most clearly Iranian of the paintings attributed to Āqā Režā is the scene of a princely reception from the *Moraqqa'-e golšan* (L. Binyon et al., *Persian Miniature Painting*, London, 1933, pl. CAV-A.236), which is similar in composition to Safavid court paintings from the reign of Shah Ṭahmāsp (e.g., "Ḳosrow listening to Bārbad playing the lute" from the *Ḳamsa* of Nežāmī, made for Shah Ṭahmāsp between 945/1539 and 950/1543; S. C. Welch, *Wonders of the Age*, Cambridge, 1979, no. 59, pp. 159-61). The only major innovation in Āqā Režā's painting is the use of shading, particularly on facial features; the archaic composition and the youthful appearance of the enthroned prince suggest that this is an early work. The fully colored style is best appreciated in the *Anwār-e Sohaylī* paintings (fols. 21a, 36a. and 54b are signed by Āqā Režā in his characteristic fashion, and written attributions to him are found on 40b and 331b; a sixth page, fol. 20a, also appears to be his work). Here the dramatic palette of red, yellow, and other bold, flat colors is used to set the



figures off from the muted blue-green and mauve landscape; this use of color to structure the compositions follows Iranian precedents. Most of the landscape forms are also Iranian, but his use of them is idiosyncratic and archaic, recalling early 16th-century works. Nonetheless, these are the latest of Āqā Reżā's known paintings, dated 1013/1604-05 on folio 54b.

The Mughal style is most apparent in the marginal drawings of the *Moraqqa'-'e golšan*, an album compiled between 1599 and 1609. One leaf, completed on 28 Ramazān 1008/12 April 1600, shows figures in Mughal and European costume (including a Virgin and Child); while the modeling is distinctively Mughal, the decorative drapery patterns and loosely articulated figures show the persistence of Iranian conventions (Y. Godard, "Les marges du Muraqqa' Gulshan, les marges d'ĀkĀrā Riḍā," *Athār-é Īrān* 1, 1939, figs. 1-5; B. Atābāy, *Fehrest-e moraqqa'āt-e Ketāb-kāna-ye Salṭanatī*, Tehran, 1353 Š./1974-75, p. 153; see also the scene of Prince Salīm catching a cheetah, now in the collection of Sadruddin Aga Khan, reprod. A. Welch and S. C. Welch, *Arts of the Islamic Book*, Ithaca, 1982, no. 60, pp. 179-82, and the painting of a bearded musician, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, reprod. M. C. Beach, *The Grand Mogul*, Williamstown, Mass., 1978, no. 30. pp. 93-94).

Individual paintings attributed to Āqā Reżā include: (1) Prince Salīm kneeling before Shaikh Salīm Češtī, now in Paris (H. Goetz, "The Early Muraqqa's of the Mughal Emperor Jhangir," *East and West* 8, 1957, pl. XI). Although the composition is awkward, the execution is comparable to his signed works, particularly in the use of modeling for facial features. (2) The portrait of a gardener, now in the Binney Collection (E. Binney, *Indian Miniature Painting from the Collection of Edwin Binney*, 3rd ed., Portland, 1973, no. 42, p. 70). An irregular signature formula, with an unusual sequence of words and the name of Salīm positioned below that of Āqā Reżā makes this a questionable work; stylistically, it appears to be a Persian composition of about 993/1585 closely resembling a portrait said to be that of the painter Moḥammadī (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, no. 14.583) as well as Moḥammadī's own portrait of 'Alī-qolī Khan in the Topkapi Museum, Istanbul (Hazine 2155, fol. 20v; B. Schmitz, *Miniature Painting in Harat: 1570-1640*, unpublished Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1981, pls. 236, 245). (3) Leaves in two manuscripts of Sa'dī's works, a *Būstān* copied in Agra in 1604, now in a private collection, and a *Kollīyāt*, now in the collection of Sadruddin Aga Khan (S. C. Welch, *The Art of Mughal India*, New York, 1963, no. 24; Welch and Welch, *Arts of the Islamic Book*, no. 64, fol. 91a). Although connected in some fashion to Āqā Reżā, these brightly



colored paintings show a more consistent use of space and less cluttered compositions than are found in his signed works.

Although much remains obscure in the life of Āqā Rezā, his paintings show a blend of Persian and Indian features that influenced the work of other artists connected with Jahāngīr before and after the latter's accession to the throne. Āqā Rezā is credited with shaping the talent of his son Abu'l-Ḥasan, who was to become one of the most important painters of Jahāngīr's reign. Abu'l-Ḥasan retains his father's linear control but adds to it a more subtle and convincing use of light and shade to model figures and create atmosphere.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also A. Coomaraswamy, "Notes on Indian Paintings: Notes on Mughal Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 2, 1927, pp. 202-07.

J. V. S. Wilkinson, *The Lights of Canopus*, London, 1929, pls. 2-7, 29.