



BĀBOR, ABU'L-QĀSEM MĪRZĀ

BĀBOR, ABU'L-QĀSEM MĪRZĀ B. BĀYSONQOR B. ŠĀHROḲ, Timurid prince (b. 825/1422), the youngest son of Bāysonqor, the eminent Timurid bibliophile and artistic patron, and a great-grandson of the conqueror Tīmūr. His mother was a concubine of Bāysonqor's by the name of Gowhar-nasab (*Mo'ezz al-ansāb*, fol. 145b). According to K̄vāndamīr, during the reign of his grandfather, ŠāhroḲ, Bābor was not held in as high esteem as were his two older half-brothers, 'Alā'-al-Dawla and Solṭān Moḥammad, and he had to content himself with living on the stipend assigned to him. In the struggle for power that ensued in Khorasan after ŠāhroḲ's death in 850/1447, Bābor managed at first to have himself recognized as ruler of Māzandarān by Amīr Hendūka, who had been wintering in Jorjān on ŠāhroḲ's orders. After an abortive battle with his elder half-brother, 'Alā'-al-Dawla, who was holding Herat, the two agreed on K̄abūšān (Qūčān) as the boundary between their respective kingdoms (*Ḥabīb al-sīar* IV, pp. 22-23).

After ŠāhroḲ's son and legitimate heir, Uluḡ Beg, who had remained in Transoxiana but who was also vying for control of Khorasan, defeated 'Alā'-al-Dawla at Tarnāb near Herat in 852/1448, the latter fled to Bābor, now established in Astarābād (*ibid.*, p. 20). Bābor advanced into Khorasan against Uluḡ Beg and his son, 'Abd-al-Laṭīf MīrZā, by this time at odds with each other, and defeated Uluḡ who had left Herat for Transoxiana to try to counter the Uzbek threat to his Transoxianian possessions. Bābor captured Herat at the end of the month of Ḍu'l-ḥejja, 852/February, 1449, from the Qara Qoyunlū Turkmen chief, Yār-'Alī, who had been ruling there for only about twenty days.



The conquest of Herat established Bābor on the throne of Khorasan and he was now able to strike his own coinage and have his name mentioned in the Friday sermon (*ibid.*, p. 30).

After the death of Ulug Beg in 853/1449, Bābor's second brother, Solṭān Moḥammad, who was ruler of 'Erāq-e 'Ajam and Fārs, wrested Herat from Bābor after winning a battle against him at Jām (*Ketāb-e Dīārbakrīya* II, pp. 319-22). Bābor was forced to return to Astarābād, his former residence, where he soon welcomed many deserters from Solṭān Moḥammad's Herat which was experiencing not only a terrible famine that winter, but also the tyrannical exactions of one of Solṭān Moḥammad's amirs. Shortly thereafter, Solṭān Moḥammad was in turn defeated by Bābor and retreated to Iraq. In the meantime, 'Alā'-al-Dawla had set himself up as ruler of Herat in 854/1450 (*Maṭla'-e sa'dayn*, p. 1001). However, upon hearing that Bābor was returning to the city, he fled to Balk and Herat again passed to Bābor (*Ḥabīb al-sīar* IV, pp. 40-42). In 855/1451, at Čenārān, Bābor again defeated Solṭān Moḥammad who had made yet another attempt to take Khorasan from him, and after taking him prisoner, had him killed and his body sent to Herat to be buried next to that of their father, Bāysonqor (*ibid.*, pp. 45-46; *Ketāb-e Dīārbakrīya* II, p. 325). Bābor then ordered that 'Alā'-al-Dawla be blinded, but the operation was performed in such a way that his eyesight remained unimpaired (*Ḥabīb al-sīar* IV, p. 20).

As a consequence of his victory at Čenārān, Bābor came into possession of the provinces of 'Erāq-e 'Ajam and Fārs. But later that same year, 'Alā'-al-Dawla rebelled in Khorasan, and Bābor also had to contend with the Qara Qoyunlū Turkmen ruler, Jahānšāh, who had captured some of his Iraqi possessions. He succeeded in repulsing his brother who now fled from Khorasan and joined the Qara Qoyunlū court (*ibid.*, p. 48). But he was unable to hold his own against Jahānšāh and his son, Pīr Bodāq, who in a short time captured all of 'Erāq-e 'Ajam and Fārs (*Maṭla'-e sa'dayn*, pp. 1044-45). Bābor now tried to extend his power into Transoxiana where he had to face his formidable Mīrānšāhī cousin, Abū Sa'īd, from whom he tried unsuccessfully to capture Samarqand in Šawwāl, 858/October, 1454 (*ibid.*, p. 1061). At the beginning of 859/1454, Bābor reconquered Sīstān from a rebellious vassal, Shah Ḥosayn, and also put down an insurrection in the fortress of 'Emād (*Ḥabīb al-sīar* IV, pp. 53-55). After recovering from a serious illness at the beginning of 860/1455, he decided to make a pilgrimage to Mašhad where he arrived in the month of Du'l-qa'da, 860/October, 1456. After spending the winter there, he died,



probably of poisoning, in early spring on 25 Rabī' II 861/22 March 1457. He was buried in Mašhad near the tomb of Imam 'Alī al-Rezā (ibid., p. 57).

Bābor was the first patron of the later Timurid sultan, Ḥosayn Bāyqarā (842-911/1438-1506), who entered his service in Herat at the age of fourteen and was joined there by his foster brother, 'Alī-Šīr Navā'i, whose father, according to Dawlatšāh, had occupied a high position in Bābor's government (ed. Browne, pp. 495-96).

Bābor is mentioned by K̄vāndamīr as being a humble and unassuming person with a pleasant disposition (*Ḥabīb al-sīar* IV, p. 22). Like all of his Timurid relations, he was a cultivated prince and wrote poetry under the pen-name Bābor. Faḳrī Heravī, who calls him Bābor Qalandar, speaks of him as being inclined toward Sufism and as having studied the classical Sufi texts. He quotes a *robā'i* of his on the subject of Sufism as well as a *gāzal* he says was famous (*Rawzat al-salāṭīn*, pp. 34-35). In his memoirs, Ḥahīr-al-Dīn Moḥammad Bābor describes the pleasure house (*ṭarab-kāna*) he had built in Herat during his rule there (*Bābor-nāma*, fols. 188b-89).

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