



BAHRĀM MĪRZĀ

BAHRĀM MĪRZĀ (923-57/1517-49), youngest son of Shah Esmā'īl by a Mowsullū Turkman wife and full brother of Shah Ṭahmāsb; he is remembered for achievements in two areas: military and cultural. Shah Ṭahmāsb relied on his brother's loyalty and military valor for assistance against both his internal and external enemies. As was customary among the Safavids, Bahrām was made the governor of various provinces with the assistance of a guardian (*lālā*) who was the effective head of the local administration. In 936/1529-30 Bahrām and his guardian Ġāzī Khan Takkalū were given responsibility for the province of Khorasan and stationed in Herat, where they had to face a siege by the Uzbeks under 'Obayd Khan from the spring of 938/1532 until Rabī' I, 940/October, 1533. The ability of the Safavid garrison to withstand this prolonged siege was due principally to the fact that Uzbeks antagonistic to 'Obayd Khan supplied them with food, so that eventually 'Obayd Khan raised the siege and retreated. This Uzbek retreat was closely followed by the arrival of Shah Ṭahmāsb in November, 1533, when the administration of Ġāzī Khan and Bahrām Mīrzā was replaced by that of Aġzīvar Khan Šāmlū and Sām Mīrzā. For the next few years Bahrām Mīrzā was active in campaigns against the Ottomans who had invaded Iran. In the fall of 941/1534, he participated in battles in Azarbaijan and in the following year harassed the Ottoman forces that were trying to regain control of the Iranian territory they had held briefly the year before. In 943/1536-37, after the conclusion of these campaigns, Bahrām Mīrzā served briefly as governor of Lāhījān with Ḥasan Āġā as his guardian but was unable to deal with the local problems effectively. Subsequently, perhaps sometime between 953-56/1546-49, he was given



responsibility for Hamadān with Čarāg Solṭān Gerāmpā Ostājlū as his guardian. During this period there was another Ottoman invasion in which the Safavid prince Alqās Mīrzā collaborated with the invaders by leading an army of irregular troops that attacked Hamadān and seized Bahrām Mīrzā's wives and children. They were taken to Baghdad, but eventually were returned when Alqās Mīrzā died and his rebellion was suppressed. Bahrām had three sons: Solṭān Ḥosayn Mīrzā, who became governor of Kandahār; Ebrāhīm Mīrzā, the governor of Mašhad; and Badī'-al-Zamān Mīrzā, the governor of Sīstān. The latter two were killed on the orders of Shah Esmā'īl II in 978/1570-71.

In addition to his political and military activities, Bahrām Mīrzā was skilled as a calligrapher, painter, poet, and musician. He is also remembered as an important patron of the arts. His taste appears to have closely paralleled that of his brother Shah Ṭahmāsb because some of the same painters and calligraphers worked for both brothers. Rostam-'Alī Ḳorāsānī, a nephew of the renowned Behzād, was Bahrām's chief calligrapher. Two important Safavid court painters, Āqā Mīrak Ešfahānī and Mīr Mošawwer executed figural wall paintings in a garden pavilion constructed for Bahrām Mīrzā. The only surviving example of Bahrām's patronage is an album now in the Topkapı Sarayı Library, Istanbul (Hazine 2154), which contains examples of both calligraphy and paintings, including samples by Bahrām Mīrzā and his associates.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

M. Bayānī, *Ḳvošnevīsān*, pp. 103-04, 188-203, 207-08.

L. Binyon, J. V. S. Wilkinson, and B. Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting*, London, 1933, pp. 139, 183-89.

Dūst Moḥammad, *A Treatise on Calligraphists and Miniaturists*, ed. M. A. Chaghtai, Lahore, 1936.

Eskandar Beg, 1350 Š./1971, pp. 44, 58, 60, 67, 72-74, 79, 99, 110, 136-37, 478,



961; tr. Savory, pp. 74, 96, 98, 100, 111-12, 114-15, 120-21, 163, 182-83.

Qāzī Aḥmad, tr. Minorsky, pp. 60, 75, 91, 147, 183.

K. M. Röhrborn, *Provinzen und Zentralgewalt Persiens im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1966, pp. 41, 43, 46, 100ff., 146.