



## BANĀ'Ī HERAVĪ

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**BANĀ'Ī HERAVĪ**, KAMĀL-AL-DĪN ŠĪR-'ALĪ, son of Ostād Moḥammad Sabz Me'mār, poet and musicologist (857-918/1453-1512). The son of an architect and master builder (*me'mār*), he chose the pen name Banā'ī; the frequently given reading Bannā'ī (e.g., Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia* III, p. 457; *Cat. Bib. Nat.* III, p. 318) is incorrect, because in each verse where the poet's name occurs the meter requires that it should be read Banā'ī. Although he changed his pen name to Ḥālī in his later years, he is best known under his original pen name. Banā'ī was born and educated in Herat, where he acquired a wide knowledge of literature, science, calligraphy, and music, and a reputation for proficiency in all. He then turned his attention to Sufism and began to lead an ascetic life. After traveling to central Iran in search of a spiritual guide, he made his way to Fārs and there became a disciple of Shaikh Šams-al-Dīn Moḥammad Lāhijī, the head of the Nūrbakšī order of Shiraz (Šafā, *Adabiyāt* IV, pp. 397-98), whom he praises in some of his odes (*qaṣīdas*). He stayed in Shiraz until, at the invitation of the Āq Qoyunlū sultan Ya'qūb (r. 883-96/1478-90), he moved to Tabrīz, where he rose to high rank in the sultan's service. He dedicated his narrative, didactic poem *Bahrām o Behrūz* (or *Bāḡ-e eram*) to Ya'qūb and also composed *qaṣīdas* for him and for the Šervānšāh Farroḡyasār. He stayed in Azarbaijan until Ya'qūb's death (896/1490) and then returned to Herat, but discord with Amir 'Alī-Šīr Navā'ī again forced him to leave his native Herat and go to Samarkand. For some time he was a eulogist of Solṭān 'Alī Mīrzā, a grandson of the Timurid sultan Abū Sa'īd, and of Badī'-al-Zamān Mīrzā, the son and successor of Ḥosayn Bāyqarā, the sultan of Herat. Later he gained admittance, with the rank of poet laureate (*malek-al-šo'arā'*) to the court of the



Uzbek ruler, Moḥammad Šaybānī (Šaybak) Khan. During the Uzbek invasion of Khorasan, he accompanied Šaybānī Khan when the latter entered Herat. Thereafter he remained in Khorasan until Šaybānī Khan's defeat and death at the hands of Shah Esmā'īl Šafawī in 916/1510, when he returned to Transoxiana in the retinue of Tīmūr Solṭān, a son of Šaybānī Khan. He met his death in the massacre of the Sunnis at Qaršī (918/1512) carried out by Shah Esmā'īl's general and chief minister, Amir Najm Yār Aḥmad Ešfahānī, known as Tānī.

Banā'ī is generally judged to be one of the most accomplished and eloquent poets of the Timurid period. Like earlier masters of the craft, he began to write poetry after he had acquired a solid grounding in prose composition and conventional sciences. He thus combined breadth of knowledge with sharpness of mind and flair for eloquence. His fidelity to the poetic traditions of the old masters is apparent throughout his work and has left a strong imprint on his language, which is notable for its precision and clarity. He liked the poetry of the earlier periods better than that of his own; his study of the *dīvāns* of other poets prompted him to quote from and reply to their best-known *qaṣīdas* and *gāzals*. Thus he compiled two *dīvāns*, one of the *qaṣīdas*, *gāzals*, *qeṭ'as*, and *robā'īs* written under the pen name Banā'ī, the other of the replies to *gāzals* of Sa'dī and Ḥāfez, written under the pen name Ḥālī. Taqī-al-Dīn Kāšī, the author of the *taḍkeraḲolāṣat al-aš'ār*, estimates the number of verses in the first *dīvān* at 6,000 and in the second *dīvān* at 3,000. It is significant that, following Banā'ī, several poets of the Safavid period composed whole *divans* in reply to Sa'dī, Ḥāfez, Feḡānī, and others. Banā'ī is also the author of *Šaybānī-nāma*, an account of the important events in central Asia from the rise of Šaybānī Khan to the disintegration of the Timurid sultanates (Storey, I, p. 372).

There is a manuscript of the *dīvān* of Banā'ī in the Bibliothèque Nationale (*Cat. Bib. Nat.* III, p. 318), and a large number of his poems under both pen names are quoted in Taqī-al-Dīn Kāšī's *Ḳolāṣat al-aš'ār*.

Banā'ī is not to be confused with another user of the pen name Ḥālī, Dūst Moḥammad, known as Qaṣīdagū, who died in 939/1532. The latter is also mentioned, and some examples of his *qaṣīdas* are quoted, in the *Ḳolāṣat al-aš'ār*.



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(Z. Safa)