



DAWLATŠĀH SAMARQANDĪ

DAWLATŠĀH b. Amīr ‘Alā’-al-Dawla Boktīšāh Ġāzī **SAMARQANDĪ**, AMĪR (b. ca. 842/1438, d. 900/1494 or 913/1507), author of *Tadkerat al-šo‘arā* (Memorial of poets), a book containing biographies of about 150 poets with specimens of their poetry, as well as historical information. Dawlatšāh was one of the few authors before the 16th century to have devoted a work entirely to poets, arranged more or less chronologically. His is the second such full-length Persian *tadkera* of poets to have survived, the first being *Lobāb al albāb* by ‘Awfi. The only other earlier work known to have been of the same type, Abū Ṭāher Ḳāṭūnī’s *Manāqeb al-šo‘arā*, has apparently been lost. Dawlatšāh was unaware of these earlier works, however (Nafīsī, *Naẓm o naṭr* I, pp. 13, 87-88).

The title “amir” in his name and information given by ‘Alī-Šīr Navā’ī (*Majāles al-nafā’es*, p. 108), to whom the *Tadkerat al-šo‘arā* was dedicated, indicate that Dawlatšāh belonged to the ruling elite. His father, ‘Alā’-al-Dawla Boktīšāh, was a confidant of the Timurid Šāhroḡ (807-50/1405-47), and his brother Amir Rażī-al-Dīn ‘Alī, who wrote poetry in Persian and Turkish, served Abu’l-Qāsem Bābor in Khorasan (853-61/1459-57). Dawlatšāh himself wrote poetry and was for a time a companion of Sultan Ḥosayn Bāyqarā (875-912/1470-1506), but he eventually withdrew from court and government service (Dawlatšāh, ed. Browne, pp. 11, 337-38, 455-56; Ḳayyāmpūr, *Soḡanvarān*, p. 399). As Dawlatšāh completed *Tadkerat al-šo‘arā* in 892/1486, when he was about fifty years old, he was probably born in 842/1438 (Dawlatšāh, ed. Browne, pp. 11, 403). His death was reported by Ḥāǰī Ḳalīfa (*Kašf al-zonūn*, ed. Yalṭkaya and Bilge, I, cols. 387-88) and by Esmā’īl Pāšā Bāǰdādī (col. 364) as having occurred in 913/1507,



though Charles Rieu, on the authority of *Mer'āt al-ṣafā'* by Moḥammad-'Alī Borhānpūrī (comp. 1148/1735), proposed the year 900/1494 (*Persian Manuscripts I*, p. 364).

Tadkerat al-šo'arā' is divided into a lengthy preface with a biographical notice about the author; a preamble on ten poets who composed in Arabic; seven chapters on poets who composed in Persian, from Rūdakī to Dawlatšāh's contemporaries; and an epilogue on six great men of letters who lived in the author's time (e.g., 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Jāmī, 'Alī-Šīr Navā'ī) with a biographical sketch of Sultan Ḥosayn Bāyqarā. It is written in flowing prose, in a style between the epistolary and the ornate. Its chief merit is the information that it provides on the lives and works of poets who lived after the composition of *Lobāb al-albāb*. It should not, however, be overlooked that the author paid little heed to the veracity of the information that he collected, some of which belongs to the realm of fairy tales. Furthermore, the earlier the poet, the more frequent are the errors and flaws. Nevertheless, a critical reader can find much reliable and useful information, especially about periods closer to the author's own time.

Editions of *Tadkerat al-šo'arā'* have been published by an anonymous editor (Bombay, 1887); E. G. Browne (Leiden and London, 1901); and Moḥammad Ramažānī (Tehran, 1338 Š./1959). It was translated into Turkish in the mid-16th century (*Kašf al-zonūn*, ed. Yaltkaya and Bilge, cols. 387-88). According to Browne (*Lit. Hist. Persia III*, p. 436), a second, abridged Turkish translation, by Solaymān Fahmī, appeared under the title *Safīnat al-šo'arā'* in 1259/1843. In modern Turkish there is a translation in four volumes by Necāti Lugal (Istanbul, 1977). A German translation was published by Josef von Hammer (*Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens . . .*, Vienna, 1818).

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