



DELŠĀD BARNĀ

DELŠĀD BARNĀ, Tajik educator, historian, and poetess bilingual in Persian and Chaghatay Turkish (b. Ura Tepe, 1800; d. K̄oqand, 1905).

Delšād, who signed her poetry also with the pen name of Barnā, was born in Ura Tepe (historical [Osrušana](#)), in present-day northern Tajikistan. The main source for her biography is her own historical-biographical treatise *Ta'rik-e mohājerān*, as well as some verses included in her *divān*. According to Delšād's own account, she lost both her parents when she was a child, and in 1816, during an assault on Ura Tepe by the K̄oqand troops, she was captured and carried away to K̄oqand (*Divān*, fols. 13, 44; Muḵtorov, 1969, p. 37). In that period, the K̄oqand cultural and literary milieu was flourishing at the court of Moḥammad 'Omar Khan (r. 1810-22) and his wife [Nādera](#) (1792-1842), who were themselves poets and actively promoted the social and cultural life of the khanate (Qayumov, p. 63). One may conjecture that Delšād was not a court poetess, since in the manuscript sources that have come down to us there is no evidence of her possible relationship with the female literary milieu of the K̄oqand court, which was led by Nādera and was very active in the field of poetry in both Persian and Chaghatay (Grassi, p. 241; see also [Chaghatay language and literature](#)).

In 1820, Delšād married Tāš Maḵdum and started work as a teacher at the girls' school (*maktab*; see [Education iii](#); [Education xxviii](#)) of her mother-in-law, which was located in the K̄āja Kalān quarter of K̄oqand. It was her mother-in-law who familiarized her with the Chaghatay language and literature, since before arriving in K̄oqand, as Delšād herself stated, she was monolingual in



Persian. In 1830, Delšād opened her own girls' school, where she regularly taught reading and writing to about thirty girls annually—891 girls in total during her fifty-years-long career as an educator (*Ta'riq-e mohājerān*, fols. 44, 49; Muḳtorov, 1969, pp. 44, 46).

Delšād's work has survived in two manuscripts: a *divān* containing poetry in both Persian and Chaghatay, and a treatise in prose entitled *Ta'riq-e mohājerān*, composed in Persian (see Bibliography). Her *divān*, or *Montaqab al-aš'ār-e Barnā*, contains 14 *gāzals* in Persian, 50 poems in Chaghatay (among which 35 *gāzals*, 13 *moḳammases*, one *mosaddas*, and one *maṭnawī*), and a bilingual poem which follows the literary device known as *šir o šakar*. It is dated 1321/1903-04 and was copied by Solaymānqol Rāji (d. 1924).

Delšād's reputation as a prose-writer and historian rests primarily on her treatise *Ta'riq-e mohājerān*, which alternates her autobiography with the historiography of the K̄oqand Khanate, covering the period 1810s-80s. Beginning from the first assaults on Ura Tepe by the K̄oqand troops, she depicted the historical events up to the construction of the Farḡāna railway by the Russians (see Delšād, *Ta'riq*, fols. 1-68). The treatise also provides information on the literary milieu of K̄oqand in the 19th century, introducing the biographies of eleven poets (Bahāri, Divāna Qāri, Golḳani [1770s-1827], Majḏub, Maḥjub, Maḳzani, Montazer, Neẓāmi, Şabuḥi, Şadā'i, Turābi) and five poetesses, namely Fedāya, Ḥāfeẓa Ātin, Mahin Bānu, Nādera, and Jahān Ātin Oveysi (1780-1845) (Delšād, *Ta'riq*, fols. 56, 66, 67; ed. Muḳtorov, pp. 95 ff.). Of the works of these authors, only those of Golḳani, Nādera, and Jahān Ātin have come down to us; the others remain unknown to scholars.

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