



EBRĀHĪM SOLṬĀN

EBRĀHĪM SOLṬĀN b. Šāhroḡ, Timurid prince, ruler of Shiraz, military commander, and renowned calligrapher (796-838/1394-35). At his instigation and with his assistance Šaraf-al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī wrote his biography of Tīmūr (Tamerlane), the *Ẓafar-nāma*. Ebrāhīm himself achieved renown as calligrapher, particularly in the *tolṭ* script, which he employed in both Koranic manuscripts and architectural inscriptions.

Šāhroḡ’s second son, Ebrāhīm, was born to Ṭūṭī Ḳātūn, said to be of Narin Mongol stock, in the vicinity of Kars (Qarṣ/Qārṣ) during Tīmūr’s campaign in Georgia on 28 Šawwāl/26 August 1394 (Thackston, p. 245; Šāmī, I, pp. 156-57; Yazdī, I, pp. 504-11). Ebrāhīm’s early years were spent in Tīmūr’s extended household, which included the latter’s wives and young children as well as the wife and children of his progeny. In the summer of 806/1404 he was among the seven grandsons married with great pomp to their female relatives at Samarkand (Yazdī, II, pp. 423-45; *Ḥabīb al-sīar* III, p. 527), and he had expected to accompany Tīmūr on the ill-fated Chinese campaign (Yazdī, II, pp. 449, 478).

Although Ebrāhīm had served as Šāhroḡ’s deputy (*nā’eb*) at Herat in 810/1407-08 and 811-12/1409, his first independent appointment was governorship of the Balḡ region (*Maṭla’-e sa’dayn*, ed. Šafī’, II, pt. 1, pp. 61, 76, 90; *Ḥabīb al-sīar* III, p. 566; Ḳvāfī, III, p. 188). He was assigned to Shiraz in 817/1414-15 in place of his defeated cousin, Eskandar b. ‘Omar Šayḡ, where he soon was faced with a rebellion that was quelled through Šāhroḡ’s intervention (*Maṭla’-e sa’dayn*, ed. Šafī’, II, pt. 1, pp. 165-66, 177-82, 184-86; Ḳvāfī, III, pp. 221-23). Despite this difficult beginning, Ebrāhīm remained in



control of Shiraz from 818/1414 until his death in Šawwāl 838/May 1435, and his tenure was generally tranquil. During those years he also participated in military campaigns organized by his father, Šāhroḡ, and was renowned for his role in the Timurid defeat of the Turkmen leader Eskandar b. Qarā Yūsof near Salmās on 17 Ɖu'l-hejja 832/17 September 1429 (*Maṭla'-'e sa'dayn*, ed. Šafi', II, pt. 2, pp. 322-26, 331).

Ebrāhīm's activities as calligrapher and historian are his most enduring legacy. He is said to have studied calligraphy with a certain Mīr (or Pīr) Moḡammad Šīrāzī (Qāzī Aḡmad, p. 69; Bayānī, *Ḳošnevīsān* IV, p. 4), but his goal was apparently to follow the tradition of the 13th century Iraqī scribe Yāqūt Mosta'šemī. It is even alleged that Ebrāhīm's writing was sold in the Shiraz *bāzār* as that of Yāqūt (Effendī, p. 49). Ebrāhīm obtained an inscription by 'Abd-Allāh Šayrafī from Tabrīz and incorporated it in his 820/1417-18 addition to the 'Atīq Mosque in Shiraz, a building (Dokkān-e 'emāratī) which he built or repaired in the mosque courtyard (Qāzī Aḡmad, p. 24).

Ebrāhīm copied Korans and prepared monumental inscriptions for execution in carved stone or cut-tile mosaic. His inscriptions were once found on several structures in Shiraz, which he built or repaired, including the 'Atīq Mosque, a city gate, Sa'dī's tomb, and a *madrasa* known as Dār-al-Šafā and its dependency, Dār-al-Aytām, a school for orphaned boys (Ḳvāfī, III, p. 244; Qāzī Aḡmad, p. 70). One of Ebrāhīm's inscriptions executed in carved stone is now incorporated into the entrance of the shrine of 'Alī b. Ḥamza, although it probably once belonged to another structure (Behrūzī, p. 180). Ebrāhīm Solṭān also followed the precedent of earlier Shiraz rulers in leaving his mark on the ruins of Persepolis. There are inscriptions in his name inscribed on the ruins of the palace of [Darius](#) commemorating a visit in 826/1422. The longest in *nask* script, contains an excerpt from Sa'dī's *Būstān* recalling the transitory glory of Persia's past rulers (Moṣṭafawī, tr. Sharp, pp. 105, 221-24, 227). Later, in 835/1431-32, he also designed a cut-tile mosaic inscription of one of Sa'dī's *gāzals* about the equality of the grand and the humble before death for the cenotaph of that poet's tomb (Qāzī Aḡmad, pp. 70-71).

Ebrāhīm Solṭān's accomplishments as a calligrapher are best appreciated from Koranic manuscripts, which range in date from 826/1422-23 to 834/1430-31, and are executed in a variety of hands: *naskò*, *tolt̄*, and *moḡaqqaq* (or *rayḡānī*; see [CALLIGRAPHY](#)). One (Medina 6) is in Topkapi Sarayı Library (Istanbul), with text both by the 14th-century calligrapher Pīr Yaḡyā Šūfī and Ebrāhīm (Karatay, p. 100; the other, dated Ramažān 830/June 1427, is now in the



Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Jackson, nos. 23-24, pp. 172-76). The most impressive of Ebrāhīm's manuscripts, however, are large-scale volumes containing Koranic selections written mostly in gold and handsomely illuminated, one of which copied in 827/1424 during a pilgrimage to Mašhad, is kept in the library of *Āstān-e Qods* (ms. no. 414; Lings, no. 81, 172, pls. on pp. 174-75; Bayānī, *Ḳošnevīsān* IV, p. 4; Golčīn-e Ma'ānī, no. 61, pp. 137-38, pls. on pp. 139, 141). A two-volume set of Koranic excerpts, copied in 834/1430-31, now in the Pārs Museum of Shiraz (ms. no. 430) and locally known as the *haftdah man* (seventeen-man) Qur'ān, which has acquired a talismanic value, for until 1315 Š./1936 it was kept in a small chamber on top of the northern gate of the city known as the *Darvāza-ye Qor'ān*. (Behrūzī, pp. 103-04; Emdād, pp. 193-94).

Ebrāhīm Solṭān's principal intellectual mentor during his years of residence in Shiraz was the scholar Šaraf-al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī, whom he assisted in recording his grandfather's achievements (Yazdī, I, pp. 17-21; Thackston, pp. 63-65). Yazdī inserted praise of Ebrāhīm's devotion to calligraphy, the Qur'ān, and religious learning in the text's narrative (I, pp. 15-16, 507-09). Ebrāhīm's literary tastes reflect various currents of the period. He supported a Turki poet from Ḳvārazm who took the pen name of Ḥāfeẓ, with the avowed aim of producing Turki equivalents to the poetry by Hāfeẓ (Hofiz Khorazmiy, *Devon*, 2 vols., Tashkent, 1981).

Among the manuscripts produced by Ebrāhīm's court scribes are Rūmī's *Maṭnawī* dated to 822/1419, now in Gulbankian Collection, Lisbon (Gray, ed., *Arte do Oriente*, no. 119), a *Kollīyāt* of Sa'dī dated to 829/1425-26, now in Lahore at the Punjab University (Bayānī, *Ḳošnevīsān* III, p. 911), a copy of the *Šahīḥ* of Bokārī (Fayẓ-Allāh, no. 489) dated to 832/1429, and an illustrated but undated anthology containing *Kalīla wa Demna*, Marzbān b. Rostam's *Marzbān-nāma*, and *Sendbād-nāma* (Fāteḥ, ms. no. 3682), both now in the Sülaymanīya Library in Istanbul (Gray, 1979, pp. 121, 140, fig. 77).

The most famous manuscripts connected with Ebrāhīm are an illustrated but undated copy of Ferdowsī's *Šāh-nāma*, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ousley Add. 176; Sims, 1992, pp. 45-48) and a dispersed copy of Yazdī's *Zafar-nāma*, completed at Shiraz in 839/1436, after his death (Sims, 1991, pp. 175-237; idem, 1992a, pp. 132-43).



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