



## GOLBADAN BĒGOM

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**GOLBADAN BĒGOM** (b. ca. 929/1522-23, d. 6 Ramażān 1011/17 Feb. 1603), daughter of Zahir-al-Din Moḥammad Bābor (d. 937/1530, q.v.), founder of the Mughal dynasty in India, half sister of Bābor's successor, Homāyun (d. 963/1556), and author of *Homāyun-nāma*, the account of the reign of Homāyun. According to her own statement she was eight years old when Bābor died, which places her date of birth around 929/1522 (*Homāyun-nāma*, tr., p. 63). Her mother was Deldār Bēgom, whose real name was apparently Şāleḥa Solṭān, and who was the daughter of Sultan Maḥmud Mirzā, the ruler of Samarqand (Beveridge). When Golbadan was two years old, she was adopted by Bābor's senior wife, Māham Bēgam, who raised and educated her. Golbadan's early childhood was spent in Kabul while Bābor was engaged in his Indian campaign. Following Bābor's conquest of north India, she left Kabul in the company of Māham Bēgom, and joined her father in Agra in 934/1527-28. She was in Agra at the time of Bābor's death and again when her foster mother died in 940/1534 (Golbadan Bēgom, tr., p. 116). After Homāyun's defeat in 947/1540 at the hands of Šēr Šāh Sur, she was moved, together with other ladies of the royal household, first to Lahore and thence to Kabul. When Homāyun went to Persia to seek asylum, she did not go with him, but remained in Kabul. Nor did she accompany him to India after he returned from exile, although they met in Kabul in 952/1545. In the same year she was married to Keẓr K̄vāja Khan Chaghatay, a nephew of Bābor (see *Ma'āter al-omarā'*, tr. Beveridge, I, p. 813; Rieu, I, p. 247). Keẓr Khan had sided with Homāyun's brother 'Askari in fighting Homāyun at Qandahār, but was pardoned by the latter, who invested him with the rank of *amir-al-omarā'*



(*Ma'āṭer al-omarā'*, tr. Beveridge, I, p. 813; *Ā'in-e akbari*, tr. Blochmann, I, p. 365 n). Throughout Homāyun's feuds with his brothers, Golbadan remained steadfast in her loyalty to Homāyun. She dissuaded her husband from joining Prince Kāmṛān when the latter tried to enlist his support against Homāyun. In 964/1556-57, during the second year of Akbar's reign, she returned to India from Kabul (*Akbar-nāma*, tr. Beveridge, II, pp. 44, 85-86). Nothing is known about her activities from the time she arrived in India until 983/1575-76, when she went on a pilgrimage to Mecca (Heravi, tr., II, Calcutta, 1936, p. 472). She stayed in Ḥejāz for three years and six months, during which she performed the Ḥajj four times. On her return journey she was involved in a shipwreck near Aden, and was stranded in the port city for several months before reaching India in 990/1582 (Heravi, tr., II, p. 557; *Akbar-nāma*, tr. Beveridge, III, pp. 569-70; Badā'uni, II, pp. 216-17). In late 997/1588-89 she visited Kabul in the company of the queen mother to meet Akbar (*Akbar-nāma*, tr., Beveridge, III, p. 859). She died in 1011/1603 after a brief illness. Her funeral was attended by Akbar, who personally shouldered her bier for some distance (*Akbar-nāma*, tr. Beveridge, III, p. 1226).

*Homāyun-nāma*, also known as *Aḥwāl-e Homāyun Pādšāh*, was written in response to a directive from Akbar (*Homāyun-nāma*, tr., p. 83), and might have been intended to serve as material for Abu'l-Faḥl 'Allāmi's *Akbar-nāma*. It was probably undertaken in 995/1586-87 (Beveridge). The only known copy of the work is an incomplete manuscript which ends abruptly in the middle of a sentence about the blinding of Prince Kāmṛān (961/1553); it is preserved in the British Library (Rieu, *Persian Manuscripts*, p. 247). It was first published in 1902 by Annette S. Beveridge with an English translation and a lengthy introduction. The work, written in simple, straightforward Persian, deals with the historical events relating to Bābor and Homāyun. It is especially valuable for the study of Homāyun's reign, since the author's description is based upon direct, first-hand knowledge of the events. Its importance is further enhanced by the fact that it provides a glimpse into the private lives of Bābor and Homāyun.

Golbadan Bēgom reportedly was a poet in both Persian and Turkish, but very little of her poetry has reached us (probably only one couplet, see Dehḳodā, s.v. "Golbadan Bēgom"; 'Abd-al-Raḥmān, p. 436). According to Sa'id Nafisi, she and Akbar's wife Salima Solṭān were the main force behind the emperor's patronage of artists and men of learning (*Naẓm o naṭr*, pp. 363, 668).



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