



GOLESTĀN-E HONAR

GOLESTĀN-E HONAR, a 16th-century treatise on the art of calligraphy, with brief biographical notices on a selection of past and contemporary calligraphers and artists, by the Safavid author and historian Qāzi Aḥmad b. Šaraf-al-Din Ḥosayn Monši Qomi Ebrāhimi. It is an important primary source for the history of the art of bookmaking in Persia in the late Timurid to early Safavid period, containing first-hand information on some of the artists and patrons with whom the author and members of his family came into contact. Qāzi Aḥmad himself seems to have been well aware of, and even performed, some of the tasks involved in the production of manuscripts and albums (we know of at least two manuscripts that he copied in 978/1570 and 999/1590; Qāzi Aḥmad, pp. 93, 89, tr. Minorsky, pp. 138, 141, 192; Modarresi Ṭabāṭabā'i, p. 81; Maḥfuz, p. 212). However, allowance should be made for a degree of exaggeration in some of the assertions in the book (e.g., the career of the author's father at various Safavid courts; for a study of the inconsistencies found in his treatment of Solṭān-Ebrāhim Mirzā, see Farhad and Simpson; see also Maṣṣūri, pp. 17-79, who questions the authenticity of the contents of *Golestān-e honar*). It is also not clear what criteria were used in the selection of the individual artists whose careers are mentioned or who actually made the selection; there were some relatively important and equally active scribes and painters who receive no notice (for a list of them see Maṣṣūri, pp. 91-186). In fact, one of the scribes of the extant manuscripts of *Golestān-e honar*, a certain 'Alā'-al-Dawla Musawī, admitted that he was responsible for at least one interpolation in the manuscript that he copied (Dānešpažuh, 1973, p. 119-20; Akimushkin).



Golestān-e honar exists today in two versions, both of which have been published. The first version, composed around 1006/1597-98, contains a preface, an introduction, three chapters, and an epilogue (*kātema*). In the preface to this version, Qāzi Aḥmad hopes that his book will find a place in the libraries of Shah ‘Abbās and his military commander Farhād Khan Qaramānlu (q.q.v.), both of whom were at the time on a military campaign to re-capture Herat from the Uzbeks (Qāzi Aḥmad, tr. Zakhodera, plate 4, tr. Minorsky, p. 44; Golčīn-e Ma‘āni, *Taḍkerahā* II, p. 709). The introduction, very much in the vein of previous manuals on calligraphy (e.g., Solṭān-‘Ali Mašhadi’s *Sirat al-soṭur* and Qoṭb-al-Din Moḥammad Qeṣṣakvān’s *Dibāčā* to a Shah Ṭahmāsb album), briefly points out how the art of writing came about and traces its origin to Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Ṭāleb. The next three chapters are devoted to the description of *tolt*, *ta’liq*, and *nasta’liq* scripts (see CALLIGRAPHY), with brief biographical sketches of those who mastered the scripts. The epilogue is devoted to painters, illuminators, calligraphy and illustration cutters, masters of gold sprinkling and color blending, and binders.

In what is now commonly considered a revised version of *Golestān-e honar* (completed sometime around 1015/1606), the names of Shah ‘Abbās and Farhād Khan were removed from the preface, primarily because by that time Farhād Khan had been executed by Shah ‘Abbās and Qāzi Aḥmad himself had fallen from grace with the king due to a dispute with another scribe over a book in Shah ‘Abbās’ library (Qāzi Aḥmad, pp. 97-98). Furthermore, some of the biographical notices were moved around, abridged, or updated, and a few new ones added. Most of the contents of the epilogue in the first version are treated in a new fourth chapter, while a new epilogue deals in more detail with such subjects as illumination, text frames, color blending, and ink making. There is also an unpublished abridged version of *Golestān-e honar*, prepared by a Mirzā Fażl-Allāh Bābā Khan for Farhād Mirzā Mo‘tamed-al-Dawla (q.v.), which seems to include still more updates and additions and even a reference to an event of 1039/1629. If the reference to this date was actually included by Qāzi Aḥmad and not by Bābā Khan, it would be the latest date cited in his writings (Golčīn-e Ma‘āni, p. 717; Dānešpažuh, 1969, pp. 543-48; idem, 1973, pp. 125-27). Moḥammad-Taqī Dānešpažuh recently identified as another copy of *Golestān-e honar* an untitled 18th-century manuscript that is defective at both the beginning and end; it is kept in the Golestān Palace Library (Dānešpažuh, 1986, pp. 119-20; Ātābāy, pp. 483-86).

Besides the information that he had collected from his personal contacts with



artists, Qāzi Aḥmad seems to have also relied on earlier sources in writing his treatise, some of which he declares to have known or used (e.g., Ḥāfez-e Abru's *Zobdat al-tawāriḳ*; Šaraf-al-Din 'Ali Yazdi's *Zafar-nāma*, Solṭān-'Ali Mašhadi's *Sirat al-soṭur*, which he actually quotes in its entirety; Simi Nišāpuri's "treatises," perhaps including *Jawhariya*; Majnun Rafiqi's "epistle on writing," quite possibly his *Sawād al-kaṭṭ*; and Sām Mirzā's *Toḥfa-ye sāmi*), and some which he does not readily admit to have utilized (Qoṭb-al-Din Moḥammad Qeššak^vān's *Dibāča* mentioned above; Dust Moḥammad's famous *Dibāča* to the Bahrām Mirzā album; Qāzi Aḥmad Ġaffāri's *Tāriḳ-e jahānārā*; and the anonymous *Risāla dar bayān-e kāḡaḍ, morakkab-e alwān, wa kaṭṭ-e awhal*; see Qāzi Aḥmad, pp. 30, 59, 64-78, 85-86, tr. Minorsky, pp. 19, 69, 106-25, 133; Maṣṣūri, p. 80, Māyel Heravi, pp. xliii-iv, lxv).

Golestān-e honar was first published in an extensively annotated Russian translation and partial facsimile edition by Boris N. Zakhoder in 1947. Zakhoder's translation was based on a single manuscript in the Museum of Oriental Cultures in Moscow. Vladimir Minorsky was able to locate and examine three additional manuscripts: one owned by his student Clara C. Edwards (which Minorsky judged to be "a presentation copy"), one in the Salar Jung Library in Hyderabad, and a copy of one in the private collection of Ḥosayn Āqā Naḳjavāni in Tabriz (Qāzi Aḥmad, tr. Minorsky, pp. 34-39). These additional manuscripts and Zakhoder's translation provided the basis for Minorsky's English translation in 1959 (which also included a translation of Zakhoder's introduction and reproductions of illustrations from the Moscow and Edwards manuscripts). Aḥmad Sohayli K^vānsāri produced another edition of *Golestān-e honar* (Tehran, 1973) based solely on the Naḳjavāni manuscript.

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