



GOWHAR-ŠĀD ĀĠĀ

GOWHAR-ŠĀD ĀĠĀ, wife of Sultan Šāhroḡ b. Timur (r. 811-50/1409-47) and daughter of Ġiāt-al-Din Tarḡān, a ranking amir under Timur. Ġiāt-al-Din, who traced his honorary title, Tarḡān, from a grant received by his ancestor, Qešleq, from Čengiz Khan (q.v.), had married two more daughters into Timur's family (Manz, p. 186, n. 31). Gowhar-šād bore Šāhroḡ three daughters (Maryam Solṡān, Sa'ādat Solṡān, and Qutluḡ Torkān Āġā; Mo'ezz al-ansāb, fol. 137) and three sons (Uluḡ Beg, Bāysonḡor, and Moḡammad Juki; *Maṡla'e sa'dayn*, ed. Šafi', II/1, p. 199, II/2, p. 852; Abu Bakr Ṣehrāni, p. 292).

Gowhar-šād ranked below Šāhroḡ's Chinggisid wife, Malekat Āġā, but was closer to Šāhroḡ and more active politically. She was conspicuous at weddings, funerals, and religious holidays, and had close relations to many of Šāhroḡ's amirs, among whom her brothers were prominent. Gowhar-šād also had some influence in the administration of her son Bāysonḡor (e.g., *Ḥabib al-siar*, Tehran, III, p. 600). As a major patron of architecture, she commissioned the building of the shrine mosque in Mašhad (Masjed-e Jame'e Gowhar-šād, comp. 821/1418), supported by a pious foundation (*waqf*) she established in 829/1426 (Šani'-al-Dawla, II, pp. 153-57). She also had a *madrasa* and mosque complex built in Herat from 820/1417 to 841/1437-38; the *madrasa* became the mausoleum for the line of Šāhroḡ. Her architect was Qewām-al-Din Me'mār Širāzi, the most famous architect of the time (Faših, III, p. 234; *Ḥabib al-siar*, Tehran, IV, pp. 14-15; O'Kane, pp. 120-26, 167-73).

Although Gowhar-šād was exceptionally powerful, her activities were within Timurid norms. Her favoritism towards her grandson, 'Alā'-al-Dawla b.



Baysonğor (q.v.), however, caused a good deal of resentment. When Šāhroḳ was ill in 848/1444-45, she made Amir Aḥmad Firuzšāh swear allegiance to ‘Alā’-al-Dawla, and according to some (*Maṭla‘-e sa‘dayn*, ed. Šafi‘, II, pp. 837, 852; Dawlatšāh, ed. Browne, p. 405) also prevented Šāhroḳ from giving appropriate responsibility to his other descendants. Sources state that it was also due to Gowhar-šād’s persuasion that Šāhroḳ, in spite of his advanced age, left Herat in that year to punish the rebellious Sol-ṭān Moḥammad b. Bāysonğor and later to execute his supporters among the clergy (*Maṭla‘-e sa‘dayn*, ed. Šafi‘, II/2, p. 837; *Ḥabib al-siar*, Tehran, III, pp. 634-35; Dawlatšāh, ed. Browne, p. 339).

On Šāhroḳ’s death in 850/1447, Gowhar-šād took the first steps to maintain order. She and her relatives, the Tarkān emirs, were active in the succession struggle which followed, promoting the interests of ‘Alā’-al-Dawla and his son Ebrāhim. Shortly after Šāhroḳ’s death, ‘Abd-al-Laṭif b. Uluğ Beg (q.v.) took Gowhar-šād and her relatives prisoner. On 13 Šafar 851/30 April 1447, ‘Alā’-al-Dowla rescued them and made ‘Abd-al-Laṭif publicly repent his action (*Maṭla‘-e sa‘dayn*, ed. Šafi‘, II/2, pp. 879-91; *Ḥabib al-siar*, Tehran, III, pp. 636-39; Abu Bakr Ṭehrāni, pp. 298-99). In 861, Gowhar-šād, with several amirs including Tarkāns, attempted mediation among the competing princes. This threatened the predominance of the amirs of Shah Maḥmud b. Abu’l-Qāsem Bābor, who ruled Herat. Thereupon, Shah Maḥmud’s chief amir, Šir Ḥāji, murdered most of the Tarkān amirs. Shortly after this, news arrived that ‘Alā’-al-Dawla was moving against Herat, and Shah Maḥmud and his amirs left the city. Gowhar-šād put Qāzi Qoṭb-al-Din Aḥmad Emāmi in charge of the city’s defense, which submitted to Ebrāhim without resistance on 7 Rajab 861/31 May 1457 (*Maṭla‘-e sa‘dayn*, ed. Šafi‘, II/2, pp. 1127-30; *Ḥabib al-siar* IV, pp. 63-65).

On 26 Ša‘bān 861/19 July 1457, the Timurid ruler Sultan Abu Sa‘id conquered Herat. He treated Gowhar-šād well, but when he was informed that she was sharing information with Ebrāhim b. ‘Alā’-al-Dowla, and that the powerful Šir Ḥāji, fearing for his own life as the murderer of Tarkān amirs, would not serve him while Gowhar-šād was alive, he had her executed on 9 Ramaḥān 861/31 July 1457 (*Maṭla‘-e sa‘dayn*, ed. Šafi‘, II/2, pp. 1143-44; *Ḥabib al-siar*, Tehran, IV, pp. 67-69).

Except for Dawlatšāh Samarqandi, Timurid historians mention Gowhar-šād with respect and condemn her execution. On 22 Rajab 873/5 February 1469, Uzun Ḥasan Āq Qoyunlu handed over Sultan Abu Sa‘id to Gowhar-šād’s great-grandson, Yādğār Moḥammad, who killed him (Abu Bakr Ṭehrāni, p. 491).



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abu Bakr Ẓehrāni, *Ketāb-e Diārbakriya*, ed. Necatı Lugal and Faruk Sümer, 2 vols., Ankara, 1962-64, pp. 296-97, 316-18.

Shiro Ando, *Timuridische Emire nach dem Mu'izz al-ansāb: Untersuchung zur Stammesaristokratie Zentralasiens im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1992.

Aḥmad Faṣiḥ K̄vāfi, *Mojmal-e faṣiḥi*, ed. Maḥmud Farroḳ, 3 vols., Mašhad, 1339-41 Š./1960-62, III, p. 275.

Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan*, 2 vols., Princeton, 1988.

Mo'ezz al-ansāb fi šajarāt al-ansāb, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. 67.

B. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, 1987.

Beatrice Forbes Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*, Cambridge, 1989.

Kāzem Modir Šānači, "Gowhar-šād," *Nāma-ye Āstān-e qods* 8/3, 1348 Š./1969, pp. 89-109.

Idem, "Malaka-ye Herāt Gowhar-šād," *Āriānā* 28/2, 1349 Š./1970, pp. 8-24.

Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan Ṣani'-al-Dawla (E'temād-al-Salṭana), *Maṭla' al-šams*, 3 vols., Tehran, 1301-03/1883-85, II, pp. 20-21; repr. 3 vols. in one, Tehran, 2535 = 1353 Š./1974.