



# HERAT III. HISTORY, MEDIEVAL PERIOD

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## HERAT

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*Herat at the time of the Arab conquest.* When the Arab armies appeared in Khorasan in the 30s/650s, Herat was counted among the twelve capital towns of the Sasanian Empire (Markwart, pp. 8-13). The period from the 3rd to the 5th century was one of urban growth in the eastern Iranian world (Grenet). To that period belong the rare data witnessing the presence of Christians in Herat (Gignoux). Herat is described by Eṣṭakri and Ebn Ḥawqal in the 10th century as a prosperous town surrounded by strong walls with plenty of water sources, extensive suburbs, an inner citadel, a congregational mosque, and four gates, each gate opening to a thriving market place (see iv.). The government building was outside the city at a distance of about a mile in a place called *Ḳorāsānābād*. A church was still visible in the countryside northeast of the town on the road to *Balk*, and farther away on a hilltop stood a flourishing fire temple, called *Serešk*, or *Aršak* according to Mostawfi (Eṣṭakri, pp. 263-65, tr. pp. 277-82; Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 437-39, tr. pp. 424; Moqaddasi, p. 307; Mostawfi, p. 151, tr., p. 150). At the time of the Arab invasion, the Sasanian central power seemed already largely nominal in the province in contrast with the role of the Hephtalite (q.v.) tribal lords, who were settled in the Herat region and in the neighboring districts, mainly in



pastoral Bādġis and in Qohestān. It must be underlined, however, that Herat remained one of the three Sasanian mint centers in the East, the other two being Balk and Marv (Grenet, p. 381). The Hephtalites from Herat and some unidentified Turks opposed the Arab forces in a battle of Qohestān in 31/651-52, trying to block their advance on Nišāpur, but they were defeated (Ṭabari, I, p. 2886, tr., XV, p. 91); they were still actively opposing the Arabs in 51/671-72 (Ṭabari, II, p. 156, tr., XVIII, p. 163, n. 488; Bivar, p. 304).

Early Muslim sources give scarce and slightly diverging accounts of the Arab conquest of Herat, especially compared with similar information on other cities of Khorasan, such as Marv and Nišāpur. In 31/651-52, the main Arab army approaching Khorasan via Kermān advanced on Nišāpur, then on Marv and Balk. The governor of the East, ‘Abd-Allāh b. ‘Amer (q.v.) sent a detachment under the general command of Aḥnāf b. Qays, who battled the Hephtalites from Herat in Qohestān, then apparently passed Herat. According to another version, the governor sent yet another commander, ‘Abd-Allāh b. Kāzem (Ṭabari, I, pp. 2885-86, tr., XV, pp. 90-91; variant versions give other names; Aws b. Ṭalaba according to Balāḍori, p. 405, tr., II, p. 163). Herat submitted to the Arabs, and a treaty was drawn including the regions of Bādġis and Bušanġ (Balāḍori, p. 405). As did many other places in Khorasan, Herat rebelled and had to be re-conquered several times (Ṭabari, I, pp. 2904-6, tr., XV, pp. 107-9, the revolt of Qāren; also see Kolesnikov, pp. 131-46, 177). During the Omayyad caliphate, Herat was the scene of power struggle among Arab tribal commanders, especially during the sedition (*fetna*) of ‘Abd-Allāh b. Kāzem (64/863-64) and the fights of the Banu Tamim against the united Rabi‘a and Azd tribes (Balāḍori, pp. 415-16, tr., p. 179; Ṭabari, II, pp. 489 ff., 496, tr., XX, pp. 71 ff., 79; see also translator’s introd., pp. xv-xvi; Bosworth, “Khurāsān,” p. 57). It seems evident that during the early Muslim period Herat was of only secondary strategic importance, compared to Nišāpur and Marv, the main military bases for the conquest of Transoxiana.

It is difficult to assess the participation of Herat in the ‘Abbasid movement, of which Marv was the headquarters, but it is certain that ‘Abbasid emissaries circulated in all Khorasan. Herat is not quoted in the lists of towns that supplied volunteers to reinforce Abu Moslem’s army in Marv (cf. Daniel, p. 51), but a follower from Herat is explicitly mentioned in the ‘Abbasid encampment at Jīranġ, east of Marv (Ṭabari, II, pp. 1956-57, tr., XXVII, pp. 67-68 and n. 176). In 747, Abu Moslem dispatched Naẓr b. No‘aym Żabbi to Herat, who drove out ‘Isā b. ‘Aqil Layṭi, the local deputy of NasĀr b. Sayyār, the last Omayyad



governor of Khorasan (Ṭabari, II, p. 1966, tr., XXVII, p. 77; Daniel, p. 51 and n. 140). In 767 Herat and Bādġis were the main scene of the revolt of Ostādsis, a ruler (*amir, malek*) of Herat (see Daniel, pp. 133-37, and n. 65 for the date; Amoretti, pp. 497-98). Ostādsis took control of the districts of Herat and Bušanġ and was supported by some Turk groups (probably the Oġuz of Bādġis) and the Kharijites of Sistān (Daniel, pp. 134, 137). In 778, the amir of Herat, Sa'īd Ḥaraši, was placed in the sole command of the campaign against the rebellious movement of Sapid Jāmagān under al-Moqanna', after the unsuccessful attempt of Mo'ād b. Moslem, the governor of Khorasan (Ṭabari, III, p. 484, tr., XXIX, pp. 196-97; Daniel, p. 142). Since the 'Abbasid revolution in Khorasan and the eventual death of Abu Moslem (q.v.), many sectarian and socio-religious movements had appeared in the Herat region, such as the Kharijites, the Karramites, the Isma'ilis, etc., all of which were linked to Abu Moslem by various trends (Bosworth, 1994, p. 81; Daniel, p. 131).

*The local dynasties in Herat.* In 205/820-21, the caliph al-Ma'mun appointed one of his major military commanders, Ṭāher b. Ḥosayn Du'l-yaminayn, to the governorship of Khorasan. Ṭāher's grandfather, Moṣ'ab b. Rozayq, a Persian *mawlā* of the Arab governor of Sistān, had participated in the 'Abbasid movement. He had governed Bušanġ and probably Herat at around 776-77. Ṭāher b. Ḥosayn founded the first hereditary dynasty of Muslim rulers in Khorasan, with Nišāpur as its capital (Ṭabari, III, p. 1040, tr., XXXII, p. 100; Kaabi, pp. 148-51; Bosworth, 1975a, pp. 91-95; Daniel, pp. 181-82). Herat was a part of the Taherid dominion in Khorasan until the rise of the Saffarids in Sistān under Ya'qub b. Layṭ in 861, who, in 862, started launching raids on Herat before besieging and capturing it on 11 Ša'bān 253/16 August 867, and again in 872 (*Tāriḳ-e Sistān*, ed. Bahār, pp. 208, 217, followed by Bosworth, 1994, pp. 112-13) or 873 (Gardizi, ed. Ḥabibi, p. 140). The Saffarids succeeded in expelling the Taherids from Khorasan in 873 (*Tāriḳ-e Sistān*, ed. Bahār, pp. 219-23., ed. Šādeqi, pp. 111-15; Bosworth, 1994, pp. 81, 111-14; idem, 1975a, pp. 103, 110, 372). In 875, 'Amr b. Layṭ was given the office of governor of Herat, and four years later he succeeded his brother Ya'qub (d. 265/879) as supreme ruler (*amir*) of the Saffarid dynasty. The authority of the Saffarids in the Herat area was frequently challenged by former Taherid vassals. Between 267-68/880-82, Aḥmad b. 'Abd-Allāh Kojestāni, a former ally of Ya'qub, aimed at independent sovereignty; and in 882, Rāfe' b. Harṭama, supported by the people of Herat, read the Friday sermon (*koṭba*) in the name of the Taherids. The control of Herat returned to the Saffarids in 893, but Rāfe' remained a major threat for them until his death in 896 (*Tāriḳ-e Sistān*, ed. Bahār, pp.



233-41, 457-53, ed. Şādeqi, pp. 124-27, 129-32; Ebn al-Aṭir, Beirut, VII, pp. 296-304, 367-69; Bosworth 1975a, pp. 116-20; idem, 1994, pp. 194 ff., 200-201, 210-22).

Among the Taherid governors of Herat were Elyās b. Asad b. Sāmān Kōdāt (d. 856) and his son Ebrāhim. Ebrāhim led the Taherid army against Ya‘qub at the battle of Bušanj in 867 and eventually submitted to Ya‘qub after Ya‘qub’s conquest of Nišāpur (*Tāriḳ-e Sistān*, ed. Bahār, pp. 177-78, 182-83, 208-9, 225; Ebn al-Aṭir, Beirut, VII, pp. 279-80). The Samanid dynasty was established in Transoxiana by three brothers, Nuḥ, Yaḥyā, and Aḥmad. The defeat and capture of ‘Amr b. Layṭ at Balk at the end of August 900 by Esmā‘il b. Aḥmad Sāmāni opened the way for the Samanid dynasty to the conquest of Khorasan, including Herat, which they were to rule for one century. The centralized Samanid administration served as a model for later dynasties (*Tāriḳ-e Sistān*, ed. Bahār, pp. 254-56; Naršaḳi, pp. 105-9, 119-27, tr. Frye, pp. 77-80, 87-92; Ebn al-Aṭir, Beirut, VII, pp. 500-502; Barthold, 1968, pp. 202-25; Frye, 1975, pp. 136-61; Bosworth, 1994, pp. 228-30). The Samanid power was destroyed in 999 by the Qarakhanids, who were advancing on Transoxiana from the northeast, and by the Ghaznavids, former Samanid retainers, attacking from the southeast (Ebn al-Aṭir [Beirut], IX, pp. 148-49; Frye, 1975, pp. 158-60).

Sultan Maḥmud of Ġazna officially took control of Khorasan in 998. Herat was one of the six Ghaznavid mints in the region (Ebn al-Aṭir [Beirut], IX, pp. 146-48; Bosworth, 1963, pp. 44-46; idem, 1975b, p. 169; Miles, p. 377). The Ghaznavids adopted the policy of heavy tax collection, mostly in order to support their armies and finance their military campaigns. This drained the resources of Khorasan, inducing the landed nobility to look forward to the Qarakhanid invasion in 1006-08 and not to oppose the later Saljuq conquests (Barthold, 1968, p. 291; Bosworth, 1963, pp. 67-79; idem, 1975b, pp. 186-87). The brief occupation of Khorasan by the Qarakhanids was marked by monetary issues from Herat and Nišāpur (Kochnev, p. 67). When Saljuq armies, led by Toḡril Beg and Čaḡri Beg Dāwud (q.v.), invaded Khorasan in 1038, the notables of Herat surrendered the city. The declining Ghaznavids recaptured the town briefly before losing it again after their final defeat at Dandānqān (q.v.) in 1040 (Bayhaqi, ed. Fayyāz, pp. 781-85, 834 ff.; Bosworth, 1963, pp. 265-66; idem, 1968, pp. 20-21; idem, 1975b, p. 195). Khorasan was ruled by Čaḡri Beg (d. 542/1060), who entrusted the government of eastern Khorasan territories (some still to be conquered), with Herat as capital, to Musā Yabḡu (Rāvandi, p. 104; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 49-51; idem, 1994, p. 378). In 1147, Malek ‘Alā’-al-Din



Ḥosayn Ġuri, a Saljuq tributary and the founder of the independent Ghurid dynasty in the mountain region of Ġur (q.v.) to the east of Herat, drove the Ghaznavid Bahrāmšāh out of Ġazna and, challenging the Saljuqs, occupied Herat. He was defeated, however, in 1152 by Sultan Sanjar in the battle of Nāb in the vicinity of Herat (Ebn al-Aṭir [Beirut], XI, pp. 164-66; Juzjāni, *Ṭabaqāt*, pp. 258-59, 346-49; Rāvandi, p. 176; Bosworth, 1961; idem, 1968, pp. 149, 160-61).

The Ghurid rulers (*malek*) reappeared on the scene after the defeat of Sultan Sanjar at the hand of the Ġoz and his eventual death in 1157, taking part in the struggle for power in Khorasan against various post-Saljuq commanders and the K̄varazmšāhs. The Ghurid state, with the capital at Firuzkuh (q.v.), flourished under Ġiāt-al-Din (Sayf-al-Din) Moḥammad (r. 1163-1203) and his brother Mo'ezz-al-Din (Šehāb-al-Din) Moḥammad (r. 1203-06). In the Herat and Bušanj area, Sayf-al-Din challenged and killed in 1164 Tāj-al-Din Yildiz (Yelduz), the post-Saljuq amirof Herat, and extended his control over Bādġis. He then fought against another Turkic commander, Mo'ayyed-al-Din Āy Aba of Nišāpur (d. 1174), who had been invited by local people to assume power in Herat and its region. The Ghurids finally took Herat in 571/1175-76 (Juzjāni, *Ṭabaqāt*, pp. 355-58; Ebn al-Aṭir [Beirut], XI, pp. 311-12, 316; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 163, 185-87; idem, 1994, pp. 397, 399). The K̄varazmšāhs continued to challenge the Ghurids in Khorasan. In Ḍu'l-qa'da 598/August 1202, Sultan 'Alā'-al-Din Moḥammad K̄varazmšāh set out for Herat and besieged it. Towers and walls were breached and the city commander (*kut-vāl*), 'Ezz-al-Din Marġazi, sought for quarter, but the news that the Ghurid king Mo'ezz-al-Din had set out in full force for Khorasan made Sultan Moḥammad raise the siege and return. Sultan Moḥammad made another attempt on Herat in 1204, and again had to return on hearing the news of the Ghurid march on his dominion. This time the Ghurids suffered a disastrous defeat at Andkoy (q.v.) on the Oxus at the hand of the Qara Khitay, who had come to help Sultan Moḥammad, but Herat remained in their possession (Jovayni, ed. Qazvini, II, pp. 50-51, 53-59, tr. Boyle, I, pp. 317-25; Barthold, 1968, pp. 349-51). It was only after Mo'ezz-al-Din's death, when the Ghurid kingdom began to disintegrate, that Sultan Moḥammad was able to take control over all Ghurid territories in Khorasan. His peaceful accession in Herat was at the invitation of 'Ezz-al-Din Ḥosayn b. K̄armil, the Ghurid viceroy (*wāli*) of Herat, whom he confirmed in his position as governor. 'Ezz-a-Din soon changed sides and tried to reinstate the Ghurid rule, which led to his death on the order of Sultan Moḥammad and the siege of the city, during which Sultan Moḥammad had the water of the river diverted



against the walls, causing great damage (Jovayni, ed. Qazvini, I, pp. 61-69, tr. Boyle, I, pp. 327-36; Ebn Atir [Beirut], XII, pp. 226-30, 260-64). In 605/1208-09, he named a new governor in Herat. Soon, the Ghurid regained some simulacra of power in Herat, with Malek Ġiāt-al-Din Maḥmud as a puppet ruler of the K̄varzamšāh (Jovayni, ed. Qazvini, II, pp. 84-85, tr. Boyle, p. 352; Bosworth, 1968, pp. 165-66, 192). During the Ghurid period, Herat appeared as the key town for the control of the Harirud valley and the gateway towards the western Muslim world. Although Herat was not their official capital, the Ghurids built a dynastic mausoleum there, which was still visited in the 17th century (Maḥmud b. Wali, foll. 236b-239b, tr., p. 83).

*The Mongol invasion of Herat and its consequences.* The Mongols attacked the Chorasmian Empire in 1221, conquering Transoxiana and then sweeping across Khorasan. A contingent of their army, led by Tolui (Tuli), son of Čengiz Khan, reached the vicinity of Herat and invited the city to surrender in peace. The offer was rejected by Šams-al-Din Moḥammad Juzjāni, the Chorasmian governor, who also killed the Mongol envoy. Tolui entered Herat after a short siege and killed the entire garrison (reportedly of 12,000 men), but he spared the lives of general population, who had surrendered in peace after Šams-al-Din's death in the fighting (Sayf Heravi, pp. 66-72). After the departure of the main army, the people, learning of the Mongol's defeat at Parvān, killed Tolui's deputies in the Great Mosque. The Mongol punitive expedition under the command of Eljigedei (Iljigdāy) Noyān re-conquered the city in 619/1221-22 after a siege of six months, destroying it totally and massacring the entire population and sending search parties throughout the countryside to exterminate any possible survivor (Sayf Heravi, pp. 73, 76-80, 83, 86, 93; Esfzārī, ed. Emām, II, pp. 69-71; K̄vāndamir, *Ḥabib al-siar* III, pp. 41-44; Boyle, pp. 314-16).

The Mongol invasion of Khorasan left long-term effects. Herat suffered heavily from its consequences (Petrushevsky, pp. 484-91, 505-6; Morgan, pp. 73-83). The flourishing town described by the early Muslim geographers was destroyed and the region devastated. There followed a drastic demographic decline, while agricultural and other economic activities were profoundly disrupted. The destruction of the canal network of the Harirud valley had particularly disastrous effects. Sources give a picture of total desolation, even if the actual numbers quoted by them must be treated with caution (Rašid-al-Din, pp. 557-58; Sayf Heravi, pp. 83, 87; Petrushevsky, p. 491). According to Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi (p. 152, tr. pp. 150-51), in the Ghurid period there were



444,000 households, that is, about 2 million individuals, living in Herat (evidently the greater Herat would be meant here, not the inner city only). On the eve of the Mongol invasion, the town was supposedly able to muster 190,000 armed men (Sayf Heravi, p. 67), a figure usually accounting to about 10 percent of the population, which also suggests a total population of about 2 million people (Petrushevsky, p. 485, n. 5). During the second Mongol capture of Herat in 1222, 1,600,000 people are said to have been killed, while only one hundred souls to have survived in the town and in the countryside (Sayf Heravi, pp. 182-83).

Herat recovered only in the 15th century under the Timurids. There were about 400 villages reported in the Herat province (*welāyat*) in the 10th century (Ebn Rosta, p. 173), while, at the beginning of the 15th century, Ḥāfeẓ-e Abru gave the total number of about 200 (Ḥāfeẓ-e Abru, 1984, I, pp. 23-29; Petrushevsky, p. 496). The list of villages cited in Persian sources at the end of the Timurid period amounts to over 250 names (Allen, 1981, nos. 107-11, 132-391).

*Post-Mongol Herat, from the Karts to the Safavids (mid-13th to mid-18th century).* The first attempt at restoring the canals after the Mongol invasion is reported for the year 1236. It is ascribed to a group of weavers (*jāmabāf*) who had been allowed to return to Herat by Ögedei Khan (Sayf Heravi, pp. 106-11). Some economic revival can be observed in the later 13th and in the 14th century, but on a much lower scale than in the earlier times (Petrushevsky, p. 513). A royal *kār-kāna* was opened in Herat in 663/1264-65 on the Il-khan Abaqa's order (Sayf Heravi, p. 285).

Among the powers struggling for domination in Khorasan after the Mongol period, the Karts (or Korts; see ĀL-E KART) were a local dynasty descending from the Šansabāni family, a distant branch of the Ghurids. The line was founded by Šams-al-Din Moḥammad Kart (1254-78), who took the title of *malek* and was granted by the great khan Möngke (Mangu Qā'ān) the governorship of Herat, Balk, Sistān, and the entire area between them to the border of India (Jovayni, II, p. 255, tr. Boyle, pp. 518-19; Sayf Heravi, pp. 165-70; Waṣṣāf, pp. 47-48). His removal from Herat in 1276 and his eventual death in a Tabriz prison two years later did not have any lasting effect on the rule of the dynasty, despite prolonged disturbances that erupted in the city in his absence (Sayf Heravi, pp. 343-62; Rašid-al-Din, pp. 119-20, 148-50; Waṣṣāf, pp. 49-51; K̄vāndamir, *Ḥabīb al-siar* III, pp. 370-71).



Herat became the capital of the Karts (1245-1389), who must certainly be acknowledged as the builders of the post-Mongol Herat. The period of their rule remains understudied, although it appears as one of the most important in the history of the town, the period when all the bases of the future urban, economic, and political development of Herat had been laid.

The Karts ruled first as Il-khanid governors, supporting them in several tight situations (Boyle, pp. 341, 358-60, 383); then they exercised de facto power independently. Faḡr-al-Din Kart (d. early 1307) was the first to manifest some independence towards the Il-khanids. He did not travel to the capital to offer his allegiance to the new Il-khan Öljeytü (Uljāyту), which prompted the latter to send an expedition against Herat. In spite of the death of Faḡr-al-Din in the early days of the siege, the city held for six months from February to June 1307 (Sayf Heravi, pp. 509-24; Ḥāfeẓ-e Abru, 1938, pp. 18 ff.; K̄vāndamir, *Ḥabib al-siar* III, pp. 370 ff.; Mirḡvānd [Tehran], V, pp. 443-68; Boyle p. 401). Later on, his brother and successor Malek Ġiāt-al-Din (d. 728/1326-27) supported the Il-khan Abu Sa'īd against the revolt of Amir Yasa'ur (Yāsā'ur, Yasāvor, Yasur) and the Chaghatayids established in Bādġis, and defended Herat against them in 1319 (Sayf Heravi, p. 649; Ḥāfeẓ-e Abru, 1938, pp. 92-96; K̄vāndamir, *Ḥabib al-siar* III, pp. 213, 378-79; 'Abd-al-Razzāq Samarqandi, ed. Navā'i, pp. 36-38, 45 ff.; Boyle, pp. 408, 411). After the death in 1335 of Abu Sa'īd, the last Il-khan, the Karts of Herat stepped in to fill the vacuum of power in Khorasan and remained in power until the rise of Timur (Aubin, 1976).

The later Kart period was that of independent rulers. Mo'ezz-al-Din Moḡammad Pir-Ḥosayn (r. 1332-70) turned Herat principality into a viable military power in Khorasan and took the title of *solṭān* in 1349, following his victory over the rival Amir Mas'ud Sarbadār in July 1342 and his success in repelling the incursion of the Chaghatayid Amir Q/Ġazaġan into Khorasan (Ḥāfeẓ-e Abru, 2001, I, pp. 139-45; 'Abd-al-Razzāq Samarqandi, ed. Navā'i, pp. 185-88, 241-46; K̄vāndamir, *Ḥabib al-siar* III, pp. 358, 360, 380-84; Mirḡvānd [Tehran], IV, pp. 681 ff.; Aubin, 1976, pp. 26-31; Roemer, 1986a, pp. 47-48; idem, 1986d, pp. 25-26; Smith, pp. 117-18). However, the internal situation of the Kart state was unstable; and after the death of Mo'ezz-al-Din (771/1369-70) each of his two sons, Ġiāt-al-Din II Pir-'Ali (ruler in Herat, a Chaghatayid by his mother) and Malek Moḡammad (ruler in Saraḡs), struggled for power. Both had contacts with Amir Timur (r. 1370-1405) in Transoxiana and tried to secure his military support. Likewise a part of the landed nobility, headed by the Kart vizier, Mo'in-al-Din Jāmi, who had written to Timur inviting him to



bring Khorasan under his command, had close economic and family ties with Transoxiana and was supportive of Timur's conquering Khorasan. When Timur's armies arrived in Herat in 1381 after destroying Bušanj, the elites, supported by the population, surrendered the town in Moḥarram 783/April 1381 after some initial fighting, on the promise that the lives and properties of the people who had not taken part in the battle would be spared; they also undertook the payment of a substantial tribute (*māl-e āmān*). The city's fortification were dismantled, and the Kart treasures and the iron gates of the city were sent to Šahr-e Sabz (Kaš) in Transoxiana. Timur kept the Kartid government officials but installed his own son Mirānšāh as his deputy in Herat (1380-93). In 1383, Herat had to pay another heavy tribute after a short-lived and limited rebellion, and numerous craftsmen, artists, and religious scholars were deported to Transoxiana. The last ruler, Ġiāṭ al-Din II Pir-'Ali, was eliminated by Mirānšāh in 1389 (Ḥāfez-e Abru, 2001, I, pp. 446-50, 514, II, pp. 556 ff., 591-95, 699 ff.; Neẓām-al-Din Šāmi, pp. 81 ff.; K̄vādamir, *Ḥabīb al-siar* III, pp. 387-89, 429-34; Allen, 1983, p. 17; Aubin, 1963, pp. 97-105, 112-13; idem, 1976, pp 34-45, 45-53; Roemer, 1986a, pp. 47-48).

Under the Timurids, Herat assumed the role of the main capital of an empire that extended in the West as far as central Persia. On the whole, the period was one of relative stability, prosperity, and development of economy and cultural activities. It began with the nomination of Šāhroḳ, the youngest son of Timur, as governor of Herat in 1397. After the death of Timur, Šāhroḳ consolidated his position as ruler of Khorasan and of the whole Timurid state in the years 1405-09 and remained the Timurid supreme ruler under the title of Mirzā until his death in 1447 (Roemer, 1986b, pp. 101-5). In 1427, he escaped a spectacular assassination attempt in the Great Mosque ('Abd-al-Razzāq Samarqandi, ed. Šafī, II, p. 314; Esfezāri, ed. Emām, II, pp. 84-45). The reign of Šāhroḳ in Herat was marked by intense royal patronage, building activities, and promotion of manufacturing and trade, especially through the restoration and enlargement of the Herat's *bāzār*.

After a short period of succession struggle after Šāhroḳ's death, Solṭān-Abu Sa'id (r. 1451-69), a descendent of Mirānšāh, succeeded in taking power in Herat with the help of Uzbek tribes. Under his rule, in 1458, Herat suffered a brief occupation by the armies of Jahānšāh Qarā Qoyunlu, ruler of the western Persia and Azarbaijan (Roemer, 1986b, pp. 114-15). Solṭān-Abu Sa'id repeatedly had to face internal challengers, and in the end he was unable to maintain the unity of the early Timurid state. After his death, both the territories to the west



of Khorasan and Transoxiana were lost to the control of the Herat ruler. The loss of Transoxiana, fragmented into smaller holdings under several Timurid princes, eventually paved the way to the future conquest of the region by the Uzbek Shaybanid (Abu'l-Khayrid) tribes, who were to take Herat in 1507 (Semenov).

Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bāyqarā (r. 1470-1506, q.v.), who seized power after the initial period of internal struggle, is certainly the most famous Timurid ruler of Herat (Roemer, 1986b, pp. 121-22). Later Persian historiography viewed his reign in Herat as the golden age of modern times, not only because of relative stability of political and economic life, but also for cultural and scientific achievements associated with his court. The Herat royal court was celebrated in the whole Muslim East for its patronage of arts and scholarly activities, which attracted leading artists and scholars of the age.

During the long reign of Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bāyqarā, Herat underwent substantial development, and its countryside prospered. Major pious charitable foundations (*waqf*) were established in the last decades of the 15th century by Timurid princes and dignitaries, such as Mir 'Ali-Šir Navā'i (e.g., see Subtelny, 1991). A treatise on agriculture written in 1515 in Herat, *Eršād al-zerā'a* (q.v.) of Qāsem b. Yusof Abunašri, illustrates the importance of horticultural activities in the Herat region (Subtelny, 1993). According to the Turko-Mongol political tradition, the members of the Timurid house and the military aristocracy, amirs, were relatively independent from the central power through a system of land tenure (*soyurḡāl*; see EQṬĀ'), and fiscal and legal privileges. This situation certainly contributed to the weakening of the Timurid state. The reforms of the fiscal and land systems intended under Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bāyqarā met with strong opposition from the Timurid amirs, and, therefore, were not effective (Subtelny, 1988).

After conquering Transoxiana, the Uzbek Shaybanids, under the leadership of Moḥammad Khan (d. 1510) threatened the territories governed by Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bāyqarā, from about 1501 (Semenov, 1954; Roemer, 1986b, p. 124). After the death of Solṭān-Ḥosayn during a military campaign against the Uzbeks in 1506, two of his sons, Badi'-al-Zamān Mirzā and Moẓaffar-Ḥosayn Mirzā, fought for the succession. In 1507, when the army of Moḥammad Khan Šaybāni (Šibak Khan) arrived at Herat, only the garrison, besieged in the citadel, resisted, while the notables surrendered the town without fight (Kvāndamir, IV, pp. 376-78). On the whole, the Shaybanids administered Herat through former Timurid dignitaries who were maintained in office (Szuppe,



1992, pp. 72-77).

The fall of the Timurids under the pressure from the Shaybanids opened a period of unrest and struggle all over Khorasan. During the 16th century, control of Khorasan was disputed between the Shaybanids and the Safavids (1501-1722), relative newcomers from western Persia, who entered Herat in 1510, following the victory of Shah Esmā'il I (r. 1501-24, q.v.) over the Šibak Khan at the battle of Marv. The Safavids proclaimed Twelver Shi'ism as state religion. The great majority of the Herat population had always been Sunnites, with an ever-present Shi'ite minority; some persecutions and incidents involving both communities are recorded by contemporary sources, especially during the early Safavid period (esp. Amini, foll. 479a-480b; Amir Maḥmud, foll. 261-63; Wāṣefi, ed. Boldyrev, pp. 1058-59; K̄vāndamir, *Ḥabib al-siar* IV, p. 514; Ḥasan Rumlu, pp. 130-31; see also Dickson, pp. 155-60, 141; Szuppe, 1992, pp. 121-42).

*The Safavid period.* Under the Safavids, Herat was again relegated to the position of a provincial capital, albeit one of a particular importance. In the 16th century, all future Safavid rulers, from Ṭahmāsb I to 'Abbās I, were governors of Herat in their youth. Consequently, the town was governed by a military commander (*ḥākem*, *wāli*; later, *beglerbegi*, q.v.) who remained under the nominal rule of a resident royal prince. Since the beginning of the Safavid power in Herat, the office of *ḥākem* fell into the hands of the Šāmlu Turkman tribe. One particular Šāmlu family, descendants of 'Abdi Beg Šāmlu (d. 911/1505-06), who had kinship ties with the Safavid dynasty, governed Herat in a defacto hereditary way for most of the 16th and the 17th centuries (Szuppe, 1993, pp. 220-21; Tumanovich, 1989, pp. 142, 153 and passim). At one point, the Šāmlu governed Herat in semi-independent way, especially under 'Aliqoli Khan (1577-88), who seriously challenged the central Safavid power (Eskandar Beg, I, pp. 262, 276-78, 279, 283-86, tr. Savory, I, pp. 387, 407-9, 414-17; Barnābādi, fol. 5b; see also Tumanovich, 1989, pp. 127-33).

Until 1540, Herat suffered from numerous sieges, pillages, arbitrary tax levies, raiding of the countryside, famines, etc. (K̄vāndamir, *Ḥabib al-siar* IV, pp. 528-36, 552-53, and passim; Amir Maḥmud, ed. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, esp. pp. 310-15, on the anti-Safavid popular revolt under the leadership of the *k̄vājas* of Ziāratgāh; Rumlu, p. 196; see also Dickson, pp. 315-29; Szuppe, 1992, pp. 84-109). The Safavids remained in control of Herat until the fall of the dynasty, with the notable exception of the years 1588-98, when the Shaybanid 'Abd-Allāh Khan II conquered Khorasan. From its re-conquest by Shah 'Abbās I in 1598, the town



became the Safavid political and military base against the Janid (Astrakhanid) Uzbeks, the successors of the Shaybanids in Bukhara, and against the Mughals of India for the control of Qandahār (Eskandar Beg, I, pp. 363 ff., 386 ff., 564 ff., tr. Savory, II, pp. 502 ff., 558 ff., 748 ff.; Afušta'i, pp. 290 ff., 584 ff.; Tumanovich, 1989, pp. 133-35, 144-46, 153; Burton; McChesney). In 1631, Herat was seriously threatened by a regular army of Chorasmian Uzbeks under Abu'l-Ġāzi Khan. In the later 17th century, the Herat region was under pressure from the Astrakhanids, who were periodically launching military raids (Tumanovich, 1989, pp. 151-52).

In 1716, the Abdāli/Dorrāni (see DORRĀNĪ) confederation of Afghan Pashtun tribes of the Herat area, led by Aḥmad Khan (later Aḥmad Shah), challenged the Safavid governor of Herat and took control of the town and the region (Roemer, 1986c, pp. 316-17; Tumanovich, 1989, pp. 156-68). Nāder Shah Afšār, the successor of the Safavids, recaptured Herat in 1729, and it remained a part of the Persian state throughout his reign; but it seceded again after his death in 1747 and remained effectively in the hands of the Afghans and outside the frontiers of Persia (Mahdi Astarābādi, pp. 194 ff., 275 ff; Moḥammad-Kāzem Marvi, I, pp. 93 ff., 168 ff.; Lockhart, pp. 32-34, 51, 54). In the 19th century, the recovery of Herat remained an important element of the Qajar political discourse, but all attempts made in this direction (in 1838, 1856, etc.) were unsuccessful.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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See [below](#), iv.