



HOMĀYUN PĀDEŠĀH

HOMĀYUN PĀDEŠĀH, NĀṢER-AL-DIN MOḤAMMAD, posthumously known as Jahānbāni Jannat-āšiāni (1508–56), second Mughal emperor in Kabul (1530–56) and northern India (1530–40 and 1555–56). The eldest son of Bābor (q.v.), the founder of the Mughal empire, born of Mahim Begim (Begom) on 4 Du'l-qa'da 913/ 6 March 1508 in Kabul, he succeeded to the throne on 9 Jomādā I 937/29 December 1530 after Bābor's death (Abu'l-Faẓl 'Allāmi, I, p. 121; Golbadan, fol. 20b).

Homāyun's first ten years on the throne were beset by constant incursions upon his territory by Afghan warlords left over from the Lodi dynasty and by threats from Rajput and Gujarati powers to the south. In 1531 he subdued the raja of Kalinjar, and he besieged Šēr Khan at Chunar (Čonār) the following year. In 1535 he campaigned against Sultan Bahādor of Gujarat (q.v.), whom he besieged at Mandasor and finally drove into exile. In 1537 Homāyun set out for the east to confront the growing power of the Sur Afghan clan under the leadership of Šēr Khan Sur in Bihar (Behār). Homāyun seized the fortress at Chunar while Šēr Khan was in Bengal; but during Homāyun's absence from the capital first his brother Hendāl assumed the throne in Agra, and shortly thereafter another brother, Kāmrān, seized power from Hendāl. When Homāyun attempted to return to Agra from Bengal, Šēr Khan attacked him on 9 Šafar 946/June 26, 1539 at Chausa, and Homāyun was nearly drowned in the Ganges during the ensuing rout (Abu'l-Faẓl 'Allāmi, I, p. 159).

After negotiations among the brothers, Kāmrān withdrew to his fief in Lahore, and Homāyun tried in vain to fend off growing Afghan power; but as the



Afghans bore down on Delhi he was forced to retreat in 1540 to Lahore, where a council of Timurid princes and Chaghatayid nobles was held to discuss the dire situation. It was decided to retreat from the subcontinent. Many commanders withdrew to Kabul; Homāyun's cousin Mirzā Ḥaydar Doḡlāt (q.v.) went to Kashmir, hoping to establish a base of operations for the reconquest of India; and Homāyun went south into the Sind desert, where his first son, Akbar, was born in 1542 (Golbadan, fol. 48b; Abu'l-Faẓl 'Allāmi, I, p.18).

In 1544 Homāyun went to Iran. Feted in Herat by the Safavid governor by royal decree, he journeyed through Mašhad, Nišāpur, Sabzavār, and Qazvin, and he met Shah Ṭahmāsp at Solṭāniya. After parting with a valuable diamond and apparently compelled to acknowledge Shi'ism, Homāyun was re-equipped and given a division of ten thousand soldiers under the nominal command of the shah's infant son Morād Mirzā and the actual command of Budāḡ Khan Qajar to return to Timurid territory to take Kandahar and Kabul from his brothers Mirzā Kāmrān and Mirzā 'Askari, who had seized control of those two places during his absence. Kandahar was retaken from Mirzā 'Askari on 25 Jomādā II, 952/3 September 1545 and was ceded to the young Safavid prince as an apanage. The prince died almost immediately, and Kandahar became a bone of contention between the Safavids and the Mughals for many decades, the Safavids claiming that the territory had been given to them in perpetuity and the Mughals claiming that the apanage had reverted to them upon the death of the prince. After consolidating Kandahar, Homāyun took Kabul from Mir-zā Kāmrān and re-occupied it on the 12th of Ramazān/November 17 of the same year (Abu'l-Faẓl 'Allāmi I, p. 244).

Homāyun spent most of the next ten years in Kabul trying to subjugate his two refractory brothers Mirzā 'Askari and Mirzā Kāmrān and keeping his cousin Mirzā Solay-mān placated in Badakhshan while staving off incursions by the Uzbeks from Transoxiana. After numerous clashes and battles between the brothers, Mirzā Kāmrān was finally captured, blinded, and sent to Mecca in 960/1553; and there he died in 964/1557 (Abu'l-Faẓl 'Allāmi, I, p. 331).

In Du'l-ḥejja 961 (mid-November 1554), a campaign to reconquer Hindustan was launched. Without effective leadership, the Afghans suffered a series of crushing defeats, and Homāyun entered Lahore on 2 Rabi' II 962/24 February 1555. After defeating Sekandar Sur's army at Sirhind, he entered Delhi on 4 Ramazān 962/23 July 1555 (Abu'l-Faẓl 'Allāmi, I, p.351).



Homāyun died as a result of head injuries he sustained when he slipped and fell on a stone staircase in Delhi in 963/1556. A copy of the letter Homāyun sent to Akbar after his fall, dated 11 Rabi' I 963/24 January 1556 and calligraphed by Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Zarrin-qalam Kaš-miri in the third year of Jahāngir's reign (1017/1608), is on p. 13 of the Golšan Album (q.v.) in the Golestān Palace Library, Tehran. It reads as follows: "To our dearest and most precious son, beloved of fortune and under the protective gaze of God, apple of the eye of the sultanate and caliphate, Jalāl-al-Din Moḥammad Akbar (may God prolong his life and increase his days with his compassion and loving mercy). Know that near the afternoon prayer on Friday the eleventh of the current month we went up to the roof of the library, which is being rebuilt, and there we held interviews until the evening prayer. When it was time for the evening prayer and we were in a hurry to get down, we had gone a few steps down the stone staircase, which contains around twelve stairs, when the call for prayer was given. We wanted to sit down, and as we were in the act of sitting our royal foot caught in the hem of our fur coat and we rolled down the stairs to the bottom. Divine protection preserved us, and aside from some slight bruising of the head and shoulder, there is no other pain. Thanks to God's limitless favor it passed well and no injury was suffered, thank God. Our dear son should not allow himself to worry or suffer in any way, and he should be easy of mind. If any false reports have arrived or arrive, he should not believe them, for through divine favor there is no cause for concern. Any condition that ensues will be reported on a daily basis." Homāyun died several days later and was succeeded by his son Akbar from his principal wife, Ḥamida Bānu Begim (d. 1604), better known by her title of Maryam-Makāni. The coronation was held on 3 Rabi' II 963/15 February 1556 (Abu'l-Faḡl 'Allāmi, II, p. 3).

Homāyun was passionately interested in astrology and alchemy. He dressed according to the colors of the planets that rule the various days of the week and divided the branches of government according to the four elements. He is credited with several "inventions" like the high-peaked brimmed hat he and his courtiers are usually seen wearing in paintings of the period. He also designed tents, portable palaces, carpets, and other things that incorporated astrological motifs. Early in his reign he supervised the building of a new fortified city at Delhi, Dinpanāh (1533–34; Abu'l-Faḡl 'Allāmi I, p. 124).

After regaining control of Kabul in 1545, Homāyun welcomed to his court artists and learned men from Iran. K̄vāja 'Abdu'l-Ṣamad and Mir Sayyed 'Ali were among the artists who joined Homāyun's retinue, and they were



primarily responsible for introducing Safavid painting techniques and styles into the subcontinent to create the synthesis that is the hallmark of early Mughal art (Milo Cleveland Beach, *Early Mughal Painting*, Cambridge, Mass., 1987, p. 8 f.).

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