



ŠĀHIN

ŠĀHIN, Šams-al-Din Maḳdum (b. Bukhara, 1859; d. Qarši 1894), Bukharan Tajik poet and satirist.

The only child of Mollā Amān, Šams-al-Din Maḳdum Šāhin was born when his father was in his seventies (Hodizoda, 2006, p. 7). The main source for his biography is *Šadr-al-Din ‘Ayni*, according to whom Šams-al-Din’s father came from *Kulāb*; in the 1820s, Mollā Amān emigrated to *Samarqand*, and then to *Bukhara*, where his son was born (‘Ayni, p. 361). Šams-al-Din received his early education at a girls’ primary school (*maktab*) in Bukhara, before attending a local *madrassa*. The young man had to leave the madrasa in 1880 owing to his father’s death (Hodizoda, 2004, pp. 377-78; idem, 2006, pp. 7-8), with the subsequent economic difficulties. He managed, however, to surmount the financial problems with the help of the blind poet Moḥammad Ṭāherḳ’āja Boḳārā’i (Bečka, p. 533; Hodizoda, 2004, p. 378), better known under his pen name of Zarir, who was also instrumental in promoting Šāhin’s later poetical career. Having already achieved some fame under the penname Šāhin (“Falcon”), he entered the service of the Amir ‘Abd-al-Aḥad (r. 1885-1910) as a major court poet. In 1887 Šāhin married the daughter of the governor of Širābād, but sadly, just after one year of marriage, his young wife died while giving birth to their child. Seven years later, in a journey accompanying the amir to Šahr-e sabz, Šāhin died of a tuberculosis relapse in Qarši (Hodizoda, 2004, pp. 378-79; idem, 2006, pp. 9, 15), at the age of thirty-five.

Šāhin’s poetry follows to some extent the “Indian style” (*Sabk-e Hendi*) favored in the Indian subcontinent and Transoxiana and is considered as among the

finest specimens of poetry of the time. His output, as published in his collected poems (*Kulliyot*, pp. 25-559), includes 188 *ġazals*, 38 *qaşidas*, 38 *robā'is*, seven *qeţ'as*, three *moġammas*, four *mosaddas*, two *maţnawis*, one *tarji'e band*, and one *tarkib-e band*. The significance of his poetry lies in his mastery of the *ġazal*, which he also explores as a vehicle for exposing injustices committed by the amir and his court, and for criticizing the prevailing social and political order in general (Beċa, p. 533; Hodizoda, 2006, pp. 10-11, 16).

His poem *Layli o Majnun*, consisting of 1,121 couplets, was composed in 1888 and, according to the poet's own indication, in less than one month (cf. *Kulliyot*, p. 459). It provided the poet with a venue to express his deep anguish over the untimely death of his wife, to whom the poem is dedicated (Hodizoda, 2004, p. 378; idem, 2006, p. 10). In 1889, he began writing the *Toĥfa-ye dustān* (around 500 couplets; unfinished), clearly inspired by Sa'di's *Bustān* (Hodizoda, 2006, p. 11). It can be described as a didactic tract arguing the need for social and political reforms in Bukhara. It also includes, more specifically, his comments and suggestions regarding the question of early and intermediate education there.

Šāhin's reputation as a satirist rests primarily on his *Badā'e' al-şanā'e'*, a philosophical and political tract, composed during 1891-94, in which he tried to suggest possible solutions to the ethical problems facing the Bukharan society of his time. It consists of sections in prose alternating with passages in rhyming prose and offers collections of proverbs, old sayings, and lively tales replete with satirical asides (Beċa, p. 533). Because of its social content, the *Badā'e'* has often been connected by the Tajik Soviet scholars, especially Rasul Hodizoda, to the outstanding political and philosophical treatise *Nawāder al-waqā'e'* of the Bukharan reformer Aĥmad Dāneş (Hodizoda, 2004, p. 378). In addition to the comparison between Šāhin and Dāneş with respect to the social content characterizing their prose, one should also mention the Transoxianan poets Kamāl Kojandi (14th century), and Sayyedā Nasafi (17th century) as literary models affecting the style of Šāhin's later poetry (Pistoso, pp. 295-96).

Šāhin's work survives in eight manuscript copies, of which four are kept in the Oriental and Handwritten Heritage Institute of the [Tajikistan Academy of Sciences](#) in Dushanbe (MSS 561/I, 785/I-II-III, 1075, 1907), and the other four in the Biruni Oriental Institute of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences in Tashkent (MSS 129/III, 229, 2343/X, 8204). The most complete is MS 785/I-II-III (Grassi, p. 38) and includes Šāhin's *Divān* (fols. 1b-120b), *Badā'e'* (fols. 121b-132b), and *Layli o Majnun* (fols. 133b-209a); it is dated 18 Ramadan 1356/22 November

1937, and was copied by Mirzā Qābel Ġojdovāni Sawdā'i (*Katalog* IV, pp. 151-52). The incomplete MS 229, with 103 folios, is a collection of Šāhin's poems (*Sobranie* II, p. 357). There are no indications regarding the title, the date, and the scribe within the manuscript itself, but there is a suggestion that this may be an autograph, since the index card has "Šāhin, majmu'a-ye mo'allef ba qalam-e k̲v̲od" as the title of the manuscript (Hodizoda, 1974, p. 33).

The *Layli o Majnun*, in addition to MS 785/III cited above, is also included in the folios 1a-52b of the MS 561/I, dated 4 Ramadan 1312/1 March 1895 (*Katalog* IV, pp. 152-53). Moreover, it appears in the MS 1907, consisting of 92 folios, dated 11 Šafar 1324/6 April 1906, and copied by Qāri 'Abd-al-Raḥim (*ibid.*). The *Toḥfa* has been preserved only in MS 2343/X (fols. 108a-149b), which was copied in the late 19th century by Qāzi Mollā Naḍrallāh Urāq Boḳārā'i, with the pen name of Loṭfi, and was commissioned by the celebrated Bukharan intellectual Šadr-e Žiā for his personal library (*Sobranie* VI, p. 298). The *Badā'e*, in addition to MS 785/II mentioned above, is included in three more manuscript copies: MS 129/III (fols. 94b-103b), dated 1312/1894, copied by Moḥammad Šeddiq Ḥašmat (*Sobranie* V, pp. 169-70); MS 8204, consisting of 222 folios (fol. 158b, dated 1327/1909), which also includes selections from 38 other poets (see *Sobranie* VIII, pp. 177-79, where, according to Hodizoda [1974, pp. 32-33], the manuscript is incorrectly described as Šāhin's autograph); MS 1075, copied in the early 1920s by Mirzā Qābel Ġojdovāni (Hodizoda, 1974, pp. 29, 35, 39; only briefly mentioned by Muḥammadī, p. 21).

Šāhin's life inspired the series "Šohin," launched by the cinema industry "Tojikfilm" in 2005, directed by Saidjon Qodirī. The first two episodes appear online ([Shohin 1 – 2 tojikfilm](#), accessed 23 October 2013).

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