

# Mirza Muhammad-Haydar Dughlat

## *Tarikh-i Rashidi*

Mirza Muhammad-Haydar Dughlat (1500–1551), a maternal cousin of Babur Mirza and prince of the Turko-Mongolian Dughlat tribe, dedicated his *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, a history of Mughulistan and Kashghar from the mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth century and the author's memoirs to 1541, to Abdul-Rashid Khan of Mughulistan.

In his chronicle of the outstanding men of letters and the arts of the late Timurid era he gives several anecdotes on Abdul-Rahman Jami, Mir Ali-Sher Nawa'i and the poet Banna'i, and attempts a critical appreciation of the most outstanding calligraphers and artists.<sup>1</sup>



### The Poets

Among the poets who were in that glorious time, the great ones have been mentioned among the saints and ulema, like Mawlana Abdul-Rahman Jami, who, at the risk of being repetitive, heads the list not only of the saints of Khurasan but also of the ulema and poets. Truly the mention of his name is welcome repeatedly, and wherever people of literary excellence are reckoned, time and again they begin and end with his name. Mawlana Abdul-Ghafur Lari has written in his commentary on the *Nafahat*: "From the beginning to the end of his life the mawlana was always bound by the external appearance of metaphorical [love<sup>2</sup>]. The

murmur of love always sounded the drum of domination in the kingdom of his heart. Toward the end of his life I once went into his presence while he was alone performing his ablutions. His blessed arms were swollen and full of brands and scars. I was astonished by this, thinking that no eye had ever seen such luminous, unblemished arms [as he normally had]. He raised his head and saw me. 'For a long time,' he said, 'we practiced being a lover by fashioning in our mind a desirable, pleasant form and then contemplating and viewing it. For a long time, having imagined such a fantasy, we made love to it. Today God has given my arms the form of that imaginary form's arms.' When I looked, the mawlana's arms had returned to their original state."

His poetry is too well known to need any description in this miserable place. However, he has one little-known *ghazal* that has been acknowledged as incomparable. The first line consists of letters no two of which are joined together. The second line consists of words in which

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<sup>1</sup>Mirza Muhammad-Haydar Dughlat, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, ed. Muhammad Shafi', "Iqtibas az Tarikh-i Rashidi," *Oriental College Magazine* 10/3 (1934): 150–172.

<sup>2</sup>*Majaz* (metaphor) refers to '*ishq-i majazi* (literally, metaphorical love), human love, opposed to '*ishq-i haqiqi*, "real" or mystical love.

every two letters are joined together, and the third line consists of words in which every three letters are joined together, and so on to five. Here is the *ghazal*:<sup>3</sup> [155]

I have a pale face from separation from that gate: afflicted with pain and branded inwardly by that wounder of hearts.

My body is so emaciated on the night of separation from you that one would think it was the new moon so slender.

Your down is Khizr, your curly locks are musk of Tibet; your body is silver, and the rubies of your lips are vessels of sugar.

The martyr to love enjoys the pleasure of paradise; heaven eternal is the lot of the miserable.

You are sweet of lip, radiant of countenance, eloquent of speech, ambergris-scented of locks.

The continuation of the *Nafahat* is thirty sections long. Mawlana Abdul-Ghafur apologizes, saying that if he were not concerned about length, he could publish much more of the [saints'] good qualities; but he contented himself with this much. Since my purpose in writing this little bit was something else, my goal will be missed if I write more.

*Mir Ali-Sher*. His pen name was Nawa'i. No one, either before or after, has written more Turkish poetry than he has. He is a master at this craft, and his Turkish poems are as famous as Mulla [Jami's] Persian poetry. However, Nawa'i has much Persian poetry also, and in Persian he used the pen name Fani. Not only did he compose a "reply" to the divan of Khwaja Hafiz, but the "reply" he composed to Khwaja Khusraw's "*Bahr al-abrar*" *qasida* is better than anyone else's.<sup>4</sup> The first line is as follows:

The fiery ruby that adorns the crown of princes is an ember for cooking raw images in the head.<sup>5</sup>

When His Excellency Nuruddin Abdul-Rahman Jami returned from his trip to the Hejaz, Mir Ali-Sher sent this quatrain to greet him: [156]

Tell me true, O azure-hued sphere, which of these two strutted better: your world-illuminating sun from the direction of the morning, or my world-traveling moon from the direction of the evening.<sup>6</sup>

He has three Turkish and one Persian divans. He wrote a biography of saints in Turkish and composed an imitation of the *Khamsa*. Aside from another divan, he has many other compositions all in Turkish.

He stems from the Uighur *bakhshis*. His father was called Kichkinä Bakhshi and was an official. Mir Ali-Sher was acquainted with Mirza Sultan-Husayn in childhood. When the mirza became padishah, Mir Ali-Sher joined his retinue, and the mirza patronized him greatly. He was a man of learning, and it was mostly due to his efforts that so many peerless men of learning appeared in various classes during that time. While amir he worked hard and accumulated so much property that his daily income was 18,000 *shahrukhis*. Moreover he, the outstanding military man of the age, turned over to the mirza's representatives his post, with all the servants and retinue, the mint, the royal stable and workshops and retired from the military to serve as royal confidant. Insofar as was possible he tended to the affairs of the needy in his own house, and he patronized people of learning. He spent all the income from his property on good works for the next life

<sup>3</sup>Obviously the technical feat is lost in translation.

<sup>4</sup>This *qasida* by Amir Khusraw is not given in the printed text of his divan.

<sup>5</sup>The entire *qasida* is given by Dawlatshah, *Tadhkirat al-shu'ara*, p. 562-69.

<sup>6</sup>"Evening" (*shâm*) forms a pun with "Syria" (*shâm*), the direction from which Jami would have returned from the pilgrimage.

and built many charitable institutions, mosques and buildings, many of which remain in Khurasan to this day. Few have been able to construct and build so much. There was no one among the people of excellence who was not in some way patronized by him. He was a man of extreme delicacy and elegance, and he wanted everyone to be just as elegant. This was difficult for people, and for this [157] reason he was often offended. Aside from his delicacy and touchiness no one can find fault with Mir Ali-Sher. He was truly an excellent and fortunate man. He spent his entire life single and engaged in charitable works.... [159]

*Banna'i*. He too was a learned man and superb poet. There were continually disputes between him and Mir Ali-Sher, and insults were traded between them.... Because Banna'i often made Mir Ali-Sher the butt of his witticisms, the mir also began to inflict insults. He said, "Mawlana Banna'i has gone mad. Take him to the hospital and treat him [for insanity]." For this reason Banna'i fled and went to Iraq, where he found favor with Sultan Ya'qub. After a time he returned to Herat, and Mir Ali-Sher sent someone to summon him. Mir Ali-Sher acted kindly and friendly toward him, presenting him with gifts and letting bygones be bygones. Banna'i also apologized for past witticisms, and the two became friendly. While inquiring about his absence, the mir asked, "How did you find Iraq?"

"The one really good thing I found in the Iraqis," replied Banna'i, "is that they absolutely do not compose Turkish poetry."

"You are still unreasonable," said the mir. "Let us leave these insults."

### Calligraphers

The *nasta'liq* script, which gained prevalence at that time, had not existed or been heard of before. Mir-Ali [162] Tab-

rizi, the originator of this script, lived during the time of Amir Timur.

Mawlana Ja'far was his pupil, and he also wrote all scripts well and was a master of all styles, *thuluth*, *naskh*, *riqa'* and *rayhan*.

Mawlana Abdullah Ashpaz Harawi<sup>7</sup> was his pupil. Hafiz Futai,<sup>8</sup> Mawlana Mahmud Katib Samarqandi and others were pupils of Mawlana Abdullah. Moreover, all copyists are pupils of this group.

In *ta'liq* [script] Mir Abdul-Hayy was a pupil of Mawlana Ja'far, and most *ta'liq* writers are pupils of Abdul-Hayy. However, in *naskhta'liq* Mawlana Azhar, Mawlana Shaykh-Abdullah Khwarazmi and Mawlana Shaykh Mahmudi Khafiniwis<sup>9</sup> are all [Ja'far's] pupils.

Just as Mawlana Ja'far wrote better than the originator [of *nasta'liq*, Mir-Ali Tabrizi], Mawlana Azhar wrote better than [Ja'far]. Mawlana Ja'far writing was heavy and broken (*kund u shikasta*) yet it was solid, graceful, masterful and mature (*muhkam u ba-malahat u pukhta*), while Mawlana Azhar, the delicacy (*litafat*) that has been mentioned notwithstanding, wrote correctly (*durust*) but his hand was uneven. Mawlana Ja'far lived during the time of Shahrukh and was employed in the library of Mirza Baysunghur, who was the son of Mirza Shahrukh and the father of Mirza Babur Qalandar. [163]

Mawlana Azhar was in the retinue of Mirza Sultan Abu-Sa'id Kürägän. Mawlana Azhar's pupils are: Mawlana Sultan-Ali Mashhadi, Shaykh Bayazid Purani, a grandson of Shaykh Puran, and Sultan-Ali Qayini. As Mawlana Ja'far improved upon Mir-Ali Tabrizi's calligraphy and Mawlana Azhar improved upon Mawlana Ja'far's, Mawlana Sultan-Ali improved even more upon Mawlana Azhar's.

<sup>7</sup>Text misreads Yazdi for Harawi.

<sup>8</sup>Given in Mustafā 'Āli, *Manāqib*, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup>= Shaykh Kamāluddīn Mahmūd Harawī.

Mawlana Sultan-Ali Mashhadi: All are of one accord with regard to his specimens and inscriptions, both minuscule and majuscule, and even *naskhta'liq*, that no one, before or after him, could come close to him. In all qualities he was without equal; especially the grace (*malahat*) and verve (*maza*) that his writing has, no one else has had. He has written a treatise on the canons of calligraphy (*âdâb-i khatt*)<sup>10</sup> in which he says: "Early in my career I practiced calligraphy in the sacred precincts of the shrine at Tus.<sup>11</sup> At that time I had a dream in which the Imam of the Pious, Legatee of the Apostle of the Lord of the Worlds, the Victorious Lion of God Ali ibn Abi-Talib put a pen in [my] hand. I awoke from my dream, and then I knew how to write." During his youth, when he was practicing, he shaped his script in such a way that was popular but did not please professionals. Mawlana Ja'far had begun a *Khamsa* but left it unfinished; Mirza Sultan Abu-Sa'id asked if there was no one who could complete it. Since Mawlana Sultan-Ali had acquired a reputation with the people, they said, [164] "At present he has quite a reputation. Perhaps he can bring this important task to fruition." Mawlana Sultan-Ali was brought [to court] and shown Mawlana Ja'far's work. He immediately accepted, copied one section, and brought it [for approval]. Mawlana Azhar was seated at the door of a chamber. When [Sultan-Ali] showed Mawlana Azhar [what he had written], Azhar grew angry and said, "You think you'll complete Mawlana Ja'far's *Khamsa* in this style!?" [So saying,] he took Mawlana Sultan-Ali

<sup>10</sup>Sultân-'Alî Mashhadî, *Şirâ' al-khuṭūf*. Photo reproduction and Russian translation by G. I. Kostygova, "Traktat po kalligrafii Sultan-'Alî Meshkhedi," *Trudy Gosudarstvennoy Publichnoy Biblioteki imeni M. E. Saltykova-Shchedrina*, vol. 2, part 5 (Leningrad, 1957), pp. 103-163. English translation in Qādî Ahmad, *Calligraphers and Painters*, trs. V. Minorsky (Washington: Freer Gallery, 1959), pp. 106-125.

<sup>11</sup>I.e., the shrine of Imam Riza at Mashhad.

to a room, kicked him inside and kept him under lock and key for two days. After that he released him and said, "My son, you have a great talent, but your writing is that of an autodidact. The *nasta'liq* style is not like that." He gave him a sample and said, "One must write in this style." The mulla used to say: "I took the sample and copied it. After copying I realized that that was how *naskhta'liq* should be. Prior to that I was unaware of the lack of technique (*be-uslubî*) in my writing and was proud of my masterliness, purity and forcefulness (*pukhtagi u safi u muhkami*). Writing that lacks technique cannot be called calligraphy."

Today so much of the mulla's writing remains that the mind can scarcely accept it, for in most countries of the world there are few connoisseurs of calligraphy who do not have specimens or books copied by the mulla. In the libraries of the emperors of the world, if there are not two or three books in the mulla's writing, it is not counted as a library. This is among the marvelous things.

### The Pupils of Mawlana Sultan-Ali

He had many pupils, among whom are Mawlana Ala'uddin [Muhammad Harawi]. No one wrote so like the mulla as did Mulla Ala'uddin, [165] especially in inscriptions. There is also Sultan-Muhammad Khandan, who wrote most charmingly. Next is Mawlana Muhammad Abrishami, whose writing was quite masterly but more broken (*shikasta*).

Then there is Mawlana Zaynuddin Mahmud, son-in-law and pupil to the mulla; his inscriptions are very good and he writes round (*gird u niz*)<sup>12</sup> and vivaciously (*ba-maza*).

Then there is Sultan-Muhammad [b.] Nur, who, although his pen is swift (*tez*), writes poorly (*kawak*). There is also Qalandar Katib, whom the master favored

<sup>12</sup>This reading is uncertain. Perhaps *u tēz* ("and fast").

particularly since, of all people, he found his disposition the most pleasing. He never had a fixed residence and never owned a shirt or shoes, spending his entire life single and alone in utter rectitude and purity. His calligraphy is inferior to the aforementioned group.

### The Pupils of This Group

There is another group who were pupils of this group. Mawlana Qasim [b.] Ali, pupil of Mawlana Muhammad Abrishami, whose pen is heavy (*kund*), but for tastefulness, refinement and forcefulness no one of this group can approach his writing, and he writes better than most of his peers. This humble one was his pupil, as will be detailed later.

Next is [Muhammad-] Qasim [b.] Shadishah, who was a pupil of Sultan-Muhammad Khandan and writes gracefully.

Next is Mawlana Mir-Ali. He was a pupil of Zaynuddin Mahmud and writes extremely purely and solidly. His minuscule is better than his majuscule, and his inscriptions are better than his specimens. He writes majuscule inharmoniously and without verve, and there is no grace in either his minuscule or his majuscule. [166] However, no one is known to have surpassed him in the power of his hand.

The group who have been penned are those who are unrivaled before and after.

### Painters (*al-musawwirun*)

*Shah-Muzaffar*, son of Master Mansur, than whom there was none better during the time of Sultan Abu-Sa'id. In this art he [Mansur] is a master: he possesses a fine, thin (*nazuk-i barik*) brush, and aside from Shah-Muzaffar, no one else has had such a fine brush; however, it is slightly drier (*chiz-i khushkhtar*) [than Shah-Muzaffar's (?)]. He does combat scenes (*girift u gir*) very forcefully. However, Shah-Muzaffar surpassed him many times over. His brush is extremely fine,

pure and possesses such grace (*malahat*) and maturity (*pukhtagi*) that the eye of the beholder is astonished. He passed away at the age of twenty-four; during his lifetime he finished seven or eight scenes (*majlis*). His pen-and-ink drawings (*qalam-siyahi*) are to be found in the possession of some people [and] the masters of this art consider them very dear.

*Bihzad*. He is a master of depiction. Although his hand is not so delicate as Shah-Muzaffar's, his brush is more forceful than the former's, but the former's draftsmanship (*tarh*) and articulation (*ustakhwanbandi*) are better than his.

Long ago in the time of the Hulaguid khans who were emperors of Iraq there was Khwaja Abdul-Hayy. The practitioners of this art believed that he was a saint (*wali*) [167]. In the end he repented [of painting], and wherever he found his works he washed them off and burned them. For this reason his works are very rare. In purity of brush (*safai-i qalam*), fineness and solidity, indeed in all characteristics of painting, he has had no peer. After Khwaja Abdul-Hayy there were Shah-Muzaffar and Bihzad. After them until our own day there has appeared no one. They were both protégés of Mir Ali-Sher.

*Qasim [b.] Ali Chihra-gushay*. He was a pupil of Bihzad. His works are like Bihzad's and in the same style [although] someone who has a practiced eye can appreciate that Qasim Ali's works are coarser than Bihzad's and that his draftsmanship (*asl-i tarh*) is somewhat inelegant (*beandamtar*).

*Maqsud*. He is next to Qasim Ali and a pupil of Bihzad. His brush is in no way inferior to Qasim Ali's, but his draftsmanship (*asl-i tarh*) and execution (*par-*

*dakht*) are neophytish (*kham*) in relation to Qasim Ali's.

*Mawlana Mirak Naqqash*. He is one of the wonders of the age. He was Bihzad's master. His sketching is more masterly than Bihzad's. Although his execution is not up to Bihzad's, still all his works were done outside in the open air, whether he was traveling, in attendance on the prince or at home; and he was never tied to a studio (*hujra*) or portfolio (*kaghadh-liq*). This is strange enough, but further yet he practiced all kinds of sports, and this is absolutely at odds with being a painter. In order to ...<sup>13</sup> he often practiced body-building exercises (*zurmandiha*) and gained a reputation for that. It is quite strange to couple painting with such things.

*Ustad Baba Hajji*. In painting, his brush is masterly, but his draftsmanship is inelegant (*beandam*). In all of Khurasan he is without equal in painting design (*tarrahi-i naqsh*) and charcoal [sketching] (*zughal-giriftan*). It is said that in a gathering he was goaded to draw fifty semicircles, all, [as though drawn by] a compass, without the slightest differentiation. Not one was larger or smaller by so much as a hair's breadth.

*Ustad Shaykh Ahmad*, brother of Baba Hajji, *Mawlana Junayd*, *Ustad Husamuddin Ghadaragar* and *Mawlana Wali* were all expert masters, and there is not much reason to prefer one over another.

*Mulla Yusuf*. A pupil of Bihzad, he is very fleet of hand (*tez-dast*). What the [other] masters can produce in one month he does in ten days. However, he does not have the refinement of brush that the others have. His illumination (*tadhib*) is better than his painting.

*Mawlana Darwesh-Muhammad*. He is my master and a pupil of Shah-Muzaffar. He has no equal in thinness (*bariki*) of brush and has surpassed even Shah-Muzaffar. However, [his painting] has not such elegance (*andam*), maturity or grace (*malahat*). His combat scenes are quite neophytish. He has made a picture of a rider who has picked up a lion on a spear: the entire [picture] fits on the end of a grain of rice.

There are many painters, but the masters and forerunners of this group are those who have been mentioned.

### Illuminators (*al-mudhahhibun*)

*Yari*. A master at illumination (*tadhib*), his outlining (*tahrir*) is even better than his illumination. He was a pupil of Mulla Wali but has surpassed him.

*Mawlana Mahmud* has done extremely fine illumination that has surpassed that of Yari. He has prepared a *debacha* for Mirza Sultan-Husayn, but it is unfinished. He labored on it for seven years and made it so intricate (*barik*) that in the joints of the *band-i rumi*, each of which may be half a chickpea in size, he has made of gold a yellow *yakmaha* (?) [such that?] fifty *islimi* tendrils can be counted, be it that he has placed and tinted<sup>14</sup> them all.

<sup>13</sup>Indecipherable phrase: *giriftan-i mātūma-māqdāri* (?).

<sup>14</sup>Reading *u shustamān karda* with MS A for the *dast ba-ān karda* of the text.