

RAUẒAT AL-AḤBĀB

EARLY 16TH CENTURY

The Rauẓat al-aḥbāb or 'Garden of Friends', by Jamāl al-Ḥusainī, transcribed early in the 16th century

SUBJECT AND ARRANGEMENT. Jamāl al-Dīn 'Aṭā Allāh ibn Faḏl Allāh, known as Jamāl al-Ḥusainī al-Shīrāzī was the nephew of Aṣīl al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusainī, who was summoned to Herat by the Timurid ruler Sulṭān Abū Sa'īd (855-72 = 1452-67). Culture was then, as we know, at such a low ebb within the realm of this prince that he had perforce to import from the more advanced lands of western Iran theologians, painters, and scribes, and Aṣīl al-Dīn acquired within the Timurid realm a high reputation for saintliness, was appointed preacher in the great mosque at Herat during the reign of Sulṭān Ḥusain, and died in this city in 883 (1478). Under the patronage of Mīr 'Alī Shīr,¹ he assisted his nephew in compiling the present work; the first book was completed in 888 (1483), and the entire work in 900 (1494), Jamāl al-Ḥusainī died many years after this date and the fall of the Timurids, viz. in 926 (1520), or 930 (1523), the first year of Shāh Ṭahmāsp's reign. The present copy of 'The Garden of Friends, concerning the History of the Prophet, his Family Companions, and successors', contains only the first *maqṣad* (of three). For a detailed description of the whole work, see Ethé, *India Office Catalogue*, i, coll. 64-65 (no. 145).

MEASUREMENTS, ETC. 25.4 × 17.9 cm.; the written surface measures 19.0 × 10.4 cm.; 25 lines; 303 folios.

WRITING AND PAPER. The writing is an elegant *Nasta'liq*. The paper is polished, and thin.

BINDING. The outside of the handsome cover is of black morocco ornamented with a sunk central medallion with two pendants having a gold ground ornamented with a design of foliage scrolls and stylized Chinese cloud forms. The inside is sumptuously decorated; it is of tawny red leather with a sunk central medallion with two pendants and sunk corner-pieces with a curvilinear inner side; the scrollwork is unusual in its details.

DATE AND SCRIBE. This copy is apparently a transcript of the author's autograph, dated 11 Zū'l-Hijjah 888 (10 January 1484), and the original colophon has been copied *in extenso*. The manuscript is unsigned and undated, and appears to have been copied towards the beginning of the 16th century.

ILLUMINATION. On fol. 2b is an *unwān* in blue and black with coloured flowers and an inscription (الله ولا سواه) in Cufic.

SEALS AND INSCRIPTIONS. On fol. 2 is a bibliographical notice of the work taken from the *Kashf al-Zunūn* of Ḥajjī Khalīfah,¹ which correctly reproduces the title and states, also correctly, that the work consists of two volumes, compiled by Jamāl al-Dīn 'Aṭā' Allāh at the request of the famous Mīr 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī. There are also seals of ownership of 'Abd al-Qādir, and of the Nādir al-Mulk Humāyūnshāhī, an officer under Humāyūn, son of Bābur, Emperor of Hindustan (937-63 = 1530-56); the latter seal is dated 979 (1571-2). As shown by the *ex libris* of two Turkish owners, Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad, called Kūchuk Chelebī-zādah, and Muṣṭafā Raḥmī, this manuscript shared the fate of a number of books taken to Hindustan, and went to Constantinople.

[E. B. and A. J. A.]