



'ABBĀS B. REZĀ-QOLĪ KHAN NŪRĪ

'ABBĀS B. REZĀ-QOLĪ KHAN NŪRĪ, calligrapher and civil servant, b. at Tāker-e Nūr in Māzandarān, d. 1255/1839-40 and buried in Najaf. According to one account, he joined the entourage of Emām-verdī Mīrzā b. Faṭḥ-'Alī Shah, under whose protection he achieved fame and wealth, including sumptuous residences in Tehran and Tāker. But in 1251/1835, after twenty years of prosperity, 'Abbās suffered a reverse of fortune; his home in Tāker was destroyed by a flood, and he was forced to retire from government service. At the time of his death he was living in seclusion and poverty (*Eqlīm-e Nūr*; see Bayānī, *Ḳošnevīsān*, p. 344).

A descendant of Nūrī, Mīrzā Afzalallāh Neẓām-al-mamālek, compiled a more detailed account of his life (summarized in *ibid.*, pp. 344-46). According to it 'Abbās became a proficient calligrapher before leaving Tāker, and inscriptions by his hand could be seen there. He began early to imitate the style of the noted calligrapher Mīr 'Emād (11th-12th/16th-17th centuries.) Moving to Tehran, 'Abbās worked in the army administration (*daftar-e laškarī*) and rose to the position of secretary of the army (*laškar-nevīs*). He was acquainted with the crown prince, 'Abbās Mīrzā, the chief minister Abu'l-Qāsem Mīrzā, and other prominent figures; and his association with Faṭḥ-'Alī Shah apparently completed his success. The shah, by this account, greatly admired Mīr 'Emād's work and wished to have an album of that master's calligraphy copied. The prince Ḥasan-'Alī Mīrzā suggested 'Abbās for the task, and 'Abbās's skill so



impressed the king that he granted the calligrapher a stipend, gifts, and the title Mīrzā-ye Bozorg. However, Fath-‘Alī Shah died in 1250/1834; the following year Ḥājī Mīrzā Āgāsī became vizier under Moḥammad Shah and forced ‘Abbās into retirement.

Surviving examples of ‘Abbās’s calligraphy range in date from 1218/1803-04 to 1239/1823-34. While said to have been skilled in all the traditional scripts, he is best remembered for his *nasta‘līq* in the manner of Mīr ‘Emād; and most significant among his extant works are the pages copied for Fath-‘Alī Shah. Several album pages preserved in the former Imperial Library, Tehran, bear the notation that they were copied from Mīr ‘Emād’s work, at the shah’s request, in 1237/1821-22 (*ibid.*, pp. 345-48). An album page now in the Fogg Museum is similar and may also belong to this commission (cf. A. Welch, *Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World*, New York, 1979, pp. 162-63, and Ḥabīballāh Fażā’elī, *Aṭlas-e kaṭṭ*, Isfahan, 1391/1971, p. 571). In these pages ‘Abbās followed the diagonal format used by Mīr ‘Emād. His script resembles that of the earlier master in the character of its lines and the rhythmic flow created by selective exaggeration of letters. (Cf., for Mīr ‘Emād, Welch, *Calligraphy*, p. 141; Ḥājī Zayn-al-dīn, *Badā‘e’ al-kaṭṭ*, Baghdad, 1972, nos. 673, 730.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Given in the text.