



'ABBĀS (II) [1982]

'**ABBĀS II**, king of Iran (1052-77/1642-66) of the Safavid dynasty. The son of Shah Šafī, he was born on 18 Jomādā II 1043/20 December 1633, and succeeded his father on 12 Šafar 1052/12 May 1642, when he was only eight and a half years old; he died on 26 Rabī' II 1077/25 September 1666.

'Abbās II was without doubt the most able and vigorous Safavid ruler after his grandfather 'Abbās I, whom in many ways he resembled. Although he was so young at the time of his accession, from that moment he displayed great strength and determination. In 1055/1645, only three years after his accession, the vizier Sārū Taqī was assassinated by a group of Qezelbāš led by the *qūrčī-bāšī*, one of the most powerful officers of state; a few days later, 'Abbās II had all the assassins executed. Like 'Abbās I, 'Abbās II had a passion for justice, and complaints of malfeasance and oppression by officials were dealt with speedily and the guilty parties severely punished. For three days a week, 'Abbās II presided over an official judicial tribunal (*dīvān-e 'adālat*) which dealt with suits brought by both the military and civilians, and two additional days were devoted to the informal hearing of grievances from all parts of the empire.

'Abbās II implemented on a huge scale the conversion of provinces from *mamālek* (state property) to *kāšša* (royal domain) status. This practice had been begun by Shah Ṭahmāsp, extended by 'Abbās I (to pay the *golām* regiments), and accelerated by Shah Šafī. Now most of the country was brought under the direct administration of the crown except in time of war, when ad hoc military governors were appointed to strategically important



frontier provinces. This policy meant the further weakening and indeed the virtual disappearance of those Qezelbāš tribes which had figured so prominently in the early Safavid period. However, during the reign of ‘Abbās II, the frontiers of the Safavid empire remained intact. Kandahār, lost to the Mughals under Shah Šafī, was recaptured in 1057/1648, and three subsequent attempts by the emperor Awrangzēb to recover it were repulsed. On the northwest frontier, ‘Abbās II attempted to stabilize the area by resettling there tribes from Azarbaijan—a reversal of the “demilitarized zone” policy of ‘Abbās I.

‘Abbās II was a builder, though not on the scale of ‘Abbās I. During his reign the Čehel Soyūn palace at Isfahan was built (1057/1647-48), the Mesjed-e Shah and the Mesjed-e Jom‘a were repaired, and a dam was constructed on the Zāyanda-rūd (1065/1654-55). Like his great-grandfather, ‘Abbās II was generally tolerant in religious matters and allowed members of Catholic orders considerable freedom of operation. A notable exception, however, was his treatment of the Jews. At the instigation of his vizier, Moḥammad Beg, he decreed that, not only Jews resident at Isfahan, but Jews throughout the empire should make public profession of their conversion to Islam and receive instruction on the Islamic faith. Some 100 thousand Jews are said to have outwardly embraced Islam but have continued to practice their religion in secret.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chief primary sources are ‘Emād-al-dawla Mīrzā Moḥammad Ṭāher Vaḥīd Qazvīnī, *‘Abbāsnāma*, ed. Ebrāhīm Dehgān, Arāk, 1329 Š./1950; and Valī-qolī Šāmlū, *Qeşaş al-kāqānī*, Tehran, n.d. On ‘Abbās II’s treatment of the Jews, see Ḥabīb Lavī, *Tārīk-e yahūd-e Īrān*, Tehran, 1960, III, pp. 291-416. For general bibliography, see [Safavid Dynasty](#).

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