



## 'ABBĀS MĪRZĀ QAJAR

'**ABBĀS MĪRZĀ**, son of Fath-'Alī Shah and father of the line of Qajar rulers from Moḥammad Shah on. He was born on 4 Du'l-ḥeǰǰa 1203/26 August 1789 in the town of Navā, Māzandarān. His mother, Āsiya Kānom, was a daughter of Fath-'Alī Khan Devellū; Fath-'Alī Shah had married her at the behest of Āqā Moḥammad Shah. A Qoyonlū on his father's side and a Devellū on his mother's, 'Abbās Mīrzā, the future crown prince, united in his person the two main branches of the Qajar tribes. By reconciling them, Āqā Moḥammad Shah had paved the way for his own accession to the throne (Hedāyat [see bibliog.], IX, p. 226; Dahncke, p. 26).

'Abbās Mīrzā grew up in an age marked by the struggle between Russia and Iran in Azarbaijan and the Caucasus. In 1797, when he was only eight years old, he accompanied his great-uncle, Āqā Moḥammad Shah, on a campaign against the local ruler of Šošā (capital of Qarabāǰ). He was left behind at Ādīna Bāzār, near Ardabīl, together with the other princes; and he returned to Tehran via Rašt after the shah's assassination that June (Fasā'i, *Fārsnāma*, pp. 242f.; tr. Busse, pp. 73, 75). On Nowrūz, 1212/21 March 1798, Fath-'Alī Shah succeeded to the throne, having ensured that his rivals no longer posed a threat. On 13 Šavvāl 1213/20 March 1799 he made 'Abbās Mīrzā crown prince with the title Nāyeb-al-salṭana. According to the Persian sources, this title accorded with the will of the late shah, whose political aim was to cement the bond between the Qoyonlū and the Devellū. Older sons were passed over, because they were the issue of wives lower in rank than Āsiya Kānom. 'Abbās was given Solaymān Khan Qājār and Mīrzā 'Īsā Farāhānī, called Mīrzā Bozorg,



as adjutants (Hedāyat, IX, p. 348; Fasā’ī, pp. 246, 231 and 267 [for Āqā Moḥammad Shah’s will]; tr. Busse, pp. 88f., 36, 160) .

At the same time, ‘Abbās Mīrzā was assigned the governorship of Azarbaijan; it was a threatened province, like Khorasan in the northeast, where the shah proceeded in the spring of 1799. Thus it was natural that the crown prince should have been dispatched to subdue the Kurd Ja‘far-qolī Khan Dombālī, who was asserting a territorial claim to Azarbaijan. After a victory near Salmās, ‘Abbās Mīrzā marched to Qoy and then returned to Tabrīz. Although the crown prince’s brothers who were also appointed governors of important provinces in the same year as himself usually took up permanent residence in their provincial capitals, ‘Abbās Mīrzā clearly did not live in Tabrīz all the time. In fact, Mīrzā Bozorg had built him the palace of Negārestān near Tehran (Tancoigne, pp. 179f.). In 1803, ‘Abbās Mīrzā was in Tehran, where, in autumn or winter, his marriage to the daughter of a Devellū prince was solemnized with great pomp (Hedāyat, IX, pp. 373f.). When the Russians overran Ganja in 1804, he left Tehran and marched to the relief of Erevan, which was under siege from Russian forces. When the Russians retreated to Tiflis, the shah, then at the Russian front, left Azarbaijan in the hands of “experienced amirs.” Faṭḥ-‘Alī Shah returned to Tehran in the fall, while ‘Abbās Mīrzā remained in Tabrīz and made preparations for the following year’s campaign. In the summer of 1805 the crown prince fought with moderate success against the Russians; only then was he formally appointed governor of “Azarbaijan and Qarabāg, from Qaplān Kūh to Darband” (Fasā’ī, p. 253; tr. Busse, p. 110). He received full authority to appoint and dismiss governors of the various districts (‘Abd-al-Razzāq, pp. 244, 285). Apart from a few brief intervals, he resided in Azarbaijan continuously until 1831; he would spend the summers in Tabrīz and the winters in Qoy, except when he took the field against the Russians or the Turks.

*The First Russo-Persian War (1804-13).* The immediate objective of the Russian advance on Ganja was to secure the southern frontier of Georgia, a province of Russian empire since 1801. According to Persian sources, Mortazā-qolī Khan, brother and rival of Āqā Moḥammad Shah, after deserting to the Russians, persuaded them to invade territory claimed by Iran (‘Abd-al-Razzāq, p. 186). With the appearance of the Russians in the frontier area, Iran was drawn into the crosscurrents of European power politics. Ambassadors from Great Britain, France, and Russia, having arrived in Tabrīz, faced the difficult task of adapting their own initiatives in Iran to the rapid fluctuation of policy in



Europe. The tribal princes between the Aras and the Caucasus proved unreliable allies for both Iran and Russia, as were the Ottoman governors of Van. The crown prince sought repeatedly to take Erevan (with the nearby fortress of Pambak). Šošā, Ganja (Elizabetpol/Korovabad), Nakhchevan, and Šīrvān. Between 1804 and 1810 he launched annual campaigns across the Aras, although the war was as good as over by 1806, for Russia had by then gained a firm hold on the land north of the Aras, with the exception of Erevan (Dahncke, p. 82). In 1810 the Russians offered Iran a peace treaty which would have restored the occupied territory to her and left her a free hand in eastern Anatolia and Mesopotamia, but these terms were rejected (‘Abd-al-Razzāq, pp. 391f.). In 1225/1810-11 Nakhchevan was once again the crown prince’s objective. Finally, in 1813, as a result of Napoleon’s campaign in Russia and at British instigation, the peace of **Golestān** in Šīrvān was signed. Under its terms Iran had to cede Darband, Baku, and Šīrvān—that is, all territory north of the Korāsān.

During the war ‘Abbās Mīrzā had secured the support of the Ottoman governor of Van. According to a Persian account (‘Abd-al-Razzāq, pp. 316-34), this assistance was the reason for a Russian advance on Qars. When the Greek war of independence broke out in 1821, Moḥammad-‘Alī Mīrzā (governor of Kermānšāh, brother and rival of the crown prince) seized the opportunity to invade Mesopotamia and reached the very walls of Baghdad. But ‘Abbās Mīrzā did not remain idle. Jealous of his brother’s success (so Fraser maintains, *Caspian Sea*, p. 312), he campaigned in the Kurdish territory of Bitlīs and Mūš, west of Lake Van. The war was ended by the peace of Erzerum, which restored the frontiers of 1639; again ‘Abbās Mīrzā and Iran had been denied success by the intervention of the European powers.

*The Second Russo-Persian war (1826-28).* The peace of Golestān had not led to any final settlement. Neither Russia nor ‘Abbās Mīrzā, however, was responsible for fomenting fresh hostilities. The ‘*olamā*’ proclaimed a *ḡhād* against Russia, as they had done in 1810; presumably court circles in Tehran and Tabrīz had some role in this affair. The shah and the crown prince had no choice but to acquiesce. In September, 1826, ‘Abbās Mīrzā advanced toward Ganja via Šošā; but he suffered such a severe defeat that the outcome of the war was never thereafter in doubt. Persian military actions the following year were of little consequence. ‘Abbās Mīrzā scored minor victories at Üč Kilise (Echmiadzin) and Nakhchevan (Fasā’ī, IX, p. 273, tr. Busse, p. 181), but the Russians penetrated into Azarbaijan and captured Tabrīz on 3 Rabī’ II 1243/24



October 1827. By the terms of the peace of Torkmānčāy (q.v.), a town southeast of Tabrīz, all land north of the Aras was ceded to Russia; the frontier thus determined still remains in effect. In a sequel to the war, ‘Abbās Mīrzā displayed his diplomatic skills to the full. When the Russian envoy Griboedov was assassinated in Tehran (8 February 1829), the crown prince declared a three-day period of public mourning and sent his son, ẖosrow Mīrzā, on a mission of atonement to Russia. (It was at first planned to send the crown prince himself). He did not agree to Paskievich’s proposal that he support the Russian campaign against the Turks (see Paskievich’s letter to ‘Abbās Mīrzā in Fonton, pp. 405-08; nevertheless, court circles in Tehran regarded him with disapproval as pro-Russian (Fraser, *Koordistan* II, pp. 46f.).

The crown prince’s position was always in jeopardy from the lack of any clear order of succession and the decentralizing policy of Fath-‘Alī Shah (factors which had an important effect on British and Russian attitudes). The crown prince’s most dangerous opponents were his brothers Ḥosayn-‘Alī Mīrzā Farmānfarmā, governor of Fārs, and Ḥasan-‘Alī Mīrzā Šojā‘-al-salṭana, governor of Khorasan until 1823 and governor of Kermān from 1243/1827-28. While ‘Abbās Mīrzā was allegedly toying with the idea of moving his residence to Isfahan (Stocqweeler, p. 174), the shah sent him to put down a rebellion in Yazd and to frustrate an alliance between the governors of Fārs and Kermān. He arrived at the Tehran court on 12 Ša‘bān 1246/21 January 1831. At the end of March he went to Yazd to restore his nephew Sayf-al-molūk Mīrzā to the governorship. He then marched on to Kermān and had Šojā‘-al-salṭana escorted back to Tehran; ẖosrow Mīrzā was installed in Kermān as the new governor. On 1 Rabī‘ II 1247/9 September 1831, the crown prince was again with the shah at Deh Kord near Isfahan. There the shah appointed him governor of Khorasan. He retained the governorship of Azarbaijan, where his fifth son, Farīdūn Mīrzā, was to represent him (Hedāyat, IX, pp. 744f.). ‘Abbās Mīrzā departed at once for the east and, in the summer and autumn of 1832, conquered the territory east and northeast of Mašhad—Ḳabūšān, Saraḳs, and Torbat-e Haydarī (Hedāyat, X, pp. 52, 55). The chroniclers assert that he planned the conquest of Ḳīva and Afghanistan, lands that had once formed part of the Safavid empire, and conducted negotiations with the vizier of Herat and the khan of ẖoḡand (Hedāyat, X, pp. 30-32). In the eyes of more objective observers, however, the Khorasan expeditions were an attempt to compensate for the defeats in Azarbaijan by scoring victories over weaker enemies; he might thus reinforce his claim to the throne (Fraser, *Koordistan* II, pp. 25-29). Even before his journey to Tehran, he had instructed his eldest son,



Moḥammad Mīrzā, to make preparations for a major offensive. Death put an end to these plans. When Moḥammad Mīrzā succeeded Faṭḥ-‘Alī Shah in 1834 and tried to continue that task in the east which Āqā Moḥammad Shah had already begun, he was checked by British intervention, just as his father had been thwarted by Russia on the Aras.

Sir Gore Ouseley, the British ambassador, who arrived in Iran in 1811, had already described ‘Abbās Mīrzā as ailing (Ouseley, II, p. 400). Ker Porter, in 1818, and others emphasize his pallor (Ker Porter, I, p. 249). Belanger, himself a doctor, examined the crown prince in 1825 and diagnosed a liver disease (“Journey to Persia,” *Gent. Mag.*, Oct., 1825, p. 301). The crown prince was constantly treated by his personal physicians, the Englishman MacNeill and Cormick; in 1238/1822-23 a Persian doctor, Moḥammad Mīrzā Eṣfahānī, was also consulted. At Mašhad the English-trained Mīrzā Bābā also attended him (Burnes, II, p. 96). Yet none of their efforts succeeded in arresting the disease. ‘Abbās Mīrzā died at Mašhad, aged forty-four, on 10 Jomādā II 1249/25 October 1833, and was buried in the shrine of Imam Reżā (Hedāyat, X, pp. 61f.).

*Education, cultural interests.* The crown prince was apparently carefully educated in the traditional manner—a process which must have been decisively influenced by Mīrzā Bozorg. The prince knew the works of the Persian historians. His favorite reading matter was Ferdawsī’s *Šāhnāma* (Morier, *Second Journey*, p. 216). He was otherwise not particularly fond of poetry, although, as fashion demanded, Tabrīz had its court poets (Šabūr of Kāšān, d. 1228/1813, and Forūg, son of the more famous Šabā; see Rypka, *Iran. Lit.*, p. 312). The palaces in Tabrīz and Ūjān were adorned with numerous pictures, including portraits of Napoleon, the czar, and Sultan Selīm III (Belanger, p. 301; Kotzebue, p. 115). The last named, a ruler favorably disposed toward Western reforms, was secretly emulated by the crown prince. Under ‘Abbās Mīrzā, thanks to its geographical position and the political situation, Tabrīz became the gateway for entry of modern influences. Western ideas entered first via Turkey and Russia, later through the French and British embassies in Azarbaijan. ‘Abbās Mīrzā seized on these eagerly and turned Tabrīz into the “focal point of the westernization of his country” (Gabriel, *Erforschung*, p. 144). He never tired of expanding his intellectual horizons. He was conversant with European history (Morier, *Journey*, p. 284), probably from the works of Turkish writers, and was very well informed about political events in Europe (Ker Porter, I, pp. 254f.). Although he could not understand English (Morier, *Second Journey*, p. 216; cf. Kotzebue, p. 105), he had a small



library of English books, including the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. A Frenchman, L’Ami, who had come to Iran with Gardane in 1807, was entrusted with setting up a modern school system (‘Abd-al-Razzāq, pp. 321f., 373f.). After the establishment of diplomatic relations with Great Britain, the crown prince became deeply receptive to English influences. He sent young men to study in England; some items of his personal equipage, including a coach used in the summer, were of English manufacture (Ker Porter, I, p. 260; idem, II, p. 507; Kotzebue, pp. 100, 104). His map collection, however, came from Istanbul printing house (Morier, *Journey*, p. 283; idem, *Second Journey*, p. 216), another identification of his unfamiliarity with Western languages.

*Military reforms.* The confrontation with the Russians, whose armies had modern equipment and were organized on modern principles, rendered urgent a reform of the Persian army. Iran found itself in a predicament similar to that which had faced the Ottoman empire since the early 18th century. In 1804 ‘Abbās Mīrzā went to war in a coat of Mongolian mail from the royal treasures (Fasāī, p. 252; tr. Busse, p. 108)—no doubt partly for reasons of symbolism. Even then he realized that the Persian army was no match for Russian tactics and weapons, and he began to train his troops along European lines (*nezām-e jadīd*). From Ottoman sources he gained a knowledge of Western military theory. Practical training was given, at first, by Russian deserters or prisoners of war who entered the crown prince’s service. This practice was reinforced when, in the wake of the European wars of liberation, unreliable units which had fought in France were transferred to the Caucasian front. In 1819 Russian deserters made up an entire regiment of 800 men (Ker Porter, II, pp. 582, 588). From 1807, French instructors were also engaged in Tabrīz; but, after the break with France, British officers formed the majority in the training program. Later, after the British presence in Azarbaijan had been severely reduced in deference to Russian interests, Italians (Sicilians), Poles, and others sought employment and reward in the prince’s service. Henry Lindsay (Bethune), who had built up the artillery, departed in 1821. Subsequently Fraser and Johnson criticized the poor condition of the artillery, the shortage of ammunition, and the practice of calling up troops for only short periods (Fraser, *Khorasan*, p. 228; Johnson, pp. 212, 214). For instruction, Ottoman, but also French and Russian (Morier, *Journey*, p. 283), texts were used. L’Ami directed the first military academy in Iran (Brydges, *Mission*, pp. 312f.); and arsenals, cannon foundries, and powder mills were set up in Tabrīz (Kotzebue, p. 100). Since ‘Abbās Mīrzā was convinced that Persian cavalry were equal to any challenge, he confined his reforms to the artillery and



infantry (Kotzebue, p. 99). In 1808-09 there were 6,000 infantry trained on European principles; in 1817, 8,000; in 1831, 12,000, plus 1,200 artillerymen and one cavalry regiment—in all, ten battalions of Persians and two of Russians (Morier, *Journey*, p. 216; Kotzebue, p. 93; Stocqweeler, p. 164).

The military program was rounded off with the building of new fortifications. The old forts of Tabrīz, Ardabīl, and Koy were modernized (Jahāngīr Mīrzā, pp. 186f.; Hedāyat, X, pp. 64f.; Morier, *Second Journey*, p. 305; Johnson, p. 221). A new fort based on European design was constructed at ‘Abbāsābād on the Aras, securing the crossing south of Nakhchevan; an Armenian church on the site was converted into a powder magazine (‘Abd-al-Razzāq, pp. 417f; Brydges, *Mission*, p. 283; Morier, *Second Journey*, p. 311). The fort of Kōrāsān Dašt, where the Qarājādāg flows into the Aras, was also intended to guard the frontier (Jahāngīr Mīrzā, p. 188). From 1819 English engineers supervised the building of Top Qaḷ’a on Lake Urmia, with its arsenal and barracks (Ker Porter, II, pp. 571-73, 580).

*Administration, economic activity, building.* The Russo-Persian wars swallowed up large sums of money. Since British subsidies were inadequate and the shah refused funds (because officials in Tehran considered Azarbaijan a rich province), ‘Abbās Mīrzā tried to solve his difficulties by drawing up a detailed fiscal register. The traditional intelligence service of the Islamic state was reactivated, a *ruznāma-nevīs* being appointed in every town to transmit information (Hedāyat, X, pp. 65f.). The custom of allowing men to buy their way into government service was abolished (Morier, *Second Journey*, p. 240). Mīrzā Abu’l-Qāsem, son of Mīrzā Bozorg, concerned himself with introducing a suitable script and a simple epistolary style.

While the traditional forms were maintained in the bureaucracy and the financial sector owing to the dearth of officials suitable for effecting reforms, a handful of industrial projects (their products to supply mostly army needs) got under way with European help. Examples are arsenals, the exploration of copper deposits, a smelter near Ahar, weaving mills, and other industrial plants. In Koy a woolen mill was built on a European design. An attempt to set up a paper mill failed, as did the scheme for a mine at Qaplān Kūh (Hedāyat, X, p. 65; Morier, *Journey*, p. 283; Johnson, pp. 213f.; Ker Porter, II, pp. 506f.; Gabriel, *Erforschung*, p. 144). About 1816, Armenians from Istanbul founded a printing house in Tabrīz (Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia* IV, p. 155). Little was done to improve the traveler’s lot. A caravansery was established on the Şāyen pass between Ardabīl and Sarāb (Hedāyat, X, pp. 261, 281).



The prince’s building activity was modest. Tabrīz received a *maydān* surrounded by the barracks—the only presentable building in Tabrīz, according to Kinneir. About 1818-19 a modest palace (*dār al-emāra*) was under construction, and *qanāts* were built outside the city. The prince ordered his officials to build houses. He also built two country seats, Bāḡ-e Šemāl and Bāḡ-e Šafā, with pavilions, avenues, and rotundas in European style. (The latter estate is described in detail in Fowler, I, pp. 77-84.) But Ker Porter commented, “The prince does not aim as much at adorning the city, as to strengthen it” (I, p. 227; cf. Hedāyat, X, p. 65; Morier, *Journey*, p. 279; Kinneir, p. 151; Kotzebue, p. 101). Koy, where the crown prince spent his summers, became, in Ker Porter’s opinion (II, p. 500), “one of the most flourishing places in the kingdom.” On the plain of Ūjān, southeast of Tabrīz, ‘Abbās Mīrzā had a small hunting lodge, which Kotzebue visited and described (p. 115; see Morier, *Second Journey*, p. 209; Johnson, pp. 208f.; Ker Porter, I, p. 258).

*Personal characteristics.* The crown prince was “rather above the ordinary stature;” his eyes were “dark and expressive...; his nose aquiline; his beard full, and like his finely-formed eye-brows, of a jet-black” (Ker Porter, I, p. 249; similarly Fowler, I, pp. 320-21). He dressed simply and scorned embellishment. He was a skilled horseman and hunter and an excellent marksman. His visitors expressed admiration for his intelligence, breadth of knowledge, benevolence, and liberal attitudes on religion; they perceived him as the future ruler who would restore his land to its former glory. “In every sense a perfect gentleman” was Burnes’s verdict (I, p. 96; cf. Morier, *Second Journey*, p. 215; Ouseley, II, p. 400; Kotzebue, pp. 95-105; Ker Porter, I, pp. 244, 254f.). When British policy toward Iran changed, so too did the opinions of British travelers. His love of reform was held to be infantile; he was said to lack perseverance, to be miserly, and to enjoy flattery (Fraser, *Caspian Sea*, pp. 310f.). After the death of Mīrzā Bozorg, his government was criticized even within Iran (E. Smith and H. G. O. Dwight, *Missionary Researches in Armenia...*, London, 1834, pp. 322-24). The crown prince’s personality, in both its positive and its negative aspects, is illuminated in an obituary notice for which Henry Willock, who had known him for many years, supplied the material (*JRAS* 1, 1834, pp. 322-25). Even though ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s character may not have been blameless (in which respect his chronic illness should be borne in mind), he was nonetheless the most capable of the Qajar rulers. He, his advisers, and his officials laid foundations on which the later reformers could build (see F. Ādamīyat, *Amīr-e Kabīr va Īrān*, Tehran, 1348 Š./ 1969, pp. 162-65). Among his advisers, besides Mīrzā Bozorg and the latter’s son, Mīrzā Abu’l-Qāsem, should



be mentioned Aḥmad Khan, *beglerbegī* of Tabrīz (see Tancoigne, p. 77).

Like all Qajars, ‘Abbās Mīrzā fathered numerous progeny: He left twenty-six sons and twenty-one daughters; Moḥammad Mīrzā, who succeeded Faṭḥ-‘Alī Shah in 1834, was born of the prince’s marriage to the daughter of Moḥammad Khan Qājā Devellū (see list in Jahāngīr Mīrzā, p. 187; Hedāyat, X, pp. 63f.). Five sons became governors of Fārs: Fīrūz Mīrzā (1835–36, 1849-53), Farīdūn Mīrzā Farmānfarmā II (1836-40), Farhād Mīrzā (1841-43, 1876-81), Bahrām Mīrzā (1848-49), and Solṭān Morād Mīrzā (1858-60). Several sons made literary names for themselves: For example, Jahāngīr Mīrzā wrote the historical work *Tā’rīk-e now* ; Farhād Mīrzā became a renowned court poet and compiled an English-Persian dictionary in verse.

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