



'ABD-AL-MAJĪD ṬĀLAQĀNĪ

'ABD-AL-MAJĪD ṬĀLAQĀNĪ, revered as the calligrapher who gave *šekasta* script its definitive form. Born in the Ṭālaqān district of Qazvīn about 1150/1737-38, he was educated in Isfahan where he died (1185/1771-72). Of an ascetic disposition, he is also known as Darvīš 'Abd-al-Majīd (Fazā'elī, *Aṭlas*, pp. 618-19; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 301). He composed poetry using as *taḵallos* both Majīd and Kāmūš (Fazā'elī, *Aṭlas*, p. 618).

Šekasta script, which combines features of *ta'liq* and *nasta'liq*, appears to have originated in Safavid court circles during the 11th/17th century, when it was used for correspondence (Fazā'elī, *Aṭlas*, pp. 607-11). The name of 'Abd-al-Majīd's teacher is not recorded, but his work is said to have surpassed that of Moḥammad Šafi' al-Ḥosaynī (d. 1081/1670-71); thus 'Abd-al-Majīd may have studied with someone who worked in the style of the latter master (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 301). 'Abd-al-Majīd's work is known largely from album pages ranging in date from 1170/1756-57 to 1185/1771-72 which are executed in both *šekasta* and *nasta'liq* scripts (Fazā'elī, *Aṭlas*, p. 619; Bayānī, *Ḳošnevīsān* II, p. 414). During the 13th/19th century *šekasta* was used, not only for correspondence and album pages, but also for copying manuscripts. 'Abd-al-Majīd's career may mark the beginning of a wider acceptance of this script. It is said that his personal formulation of *šekasta* was admired and imitated by a number of later calligraphers including Moḥammad Qāsem, known as Mirzā Kūček Ešfahānī (d. 1228/1813) and 'Abd-al-Vahhāb Mo'tamed-al-dawla Našāṭ (d. 1245/1829-30), a poet and calligrapher at the court of Faṭḥ-'Alī Shah (Fazā'elī, *Aṭlas*, p. 621; Welch, *Calligraphy*, pp. 156-57; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, pp.



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