



## ABU'L-ḤASAN GOLESTĀNA

**ABU'L-ḤASAN B. MOḤAMMAD AMĪN GOLESTĀNA**, vizier of Kermānšāhān and chronicler of post-Afsharid Iran. He was a member of a family of Ḥasanī sayyeds long established at Isfahan. Religious considerations had kept earlier members of the family from involvement with the state, but by Afsharid times Golestāna sayyeds were found in government service throughout Iran. One of Abu'l-Ḥasan's uncles, Mīrzā Moḥammad Taqī, held several positions under Afsharid dynasts: administrator (*wakīl*) of tax revenues for Kermānšāhān, treasurer of provincial revenues (*mostawfī al-mamālek*), governor of Hamadān, collector (*moḥaṣṣel*) of tax revenues for Iraq, and commandant and governor of Kermānšāhān. He held the last position through various shifts of political allegiance until his death in 1169/1756. Another uncle served as commandant of the garrison of Dezfūl and Dawraq; and Abu'l-Ḥasan's oldest brother, Mīr Mortazā Khan, was chief accountant of receipts from Iraq (*sarrešta-ye estīfā-ye 'Erāq*) in Nāder Shah's revenue administration (*daftarḳāna*). Both men emigrated to India after disputes with the shah. These family connections served Abu'l-Ḥasan well, both in Iran and India. He and two other brothers entered government service under their uncle, Mīrzā Moḥammad Taqī, at Kermānšāhān. In 1161/1748, Abu'l-Ḥasan was appointed vizier of the city, shortly after his uncle had transferred his support from one Afsharid to another. For the next eight years Abu'l-Ḥasan was deeply involved in the turbulent politics of western Iran. In 1164/1750-51, when Karīm Khan Zand mounted his unsuccessful first siege of Kermānšāhān, Abu'l-Ḥasan met with him. The purpose of the meeting is not at all clear. Karīm Khan eventually detained Abu'l-Ḥasan and then released him when he broke off the



siege. Later, when the Zand leader successfully besieged the city, Abu'l-Ḥasan was able to negotiate a safe conduct for himself and his uncle. Karīm Khan's subsequent defeat by Āzād Khan Afġan, leader of another faction, restored Mīrzā Moḥammad Taqī and Abu'l-Ḥasan to power in Kermānšāhān. Finally, in 1169/1756, after a policy dispute with his uncle, Abu'l-Ḥasan sought and received permission to make a pilgrimage to the 'otabāt (q.v.). Shortly afterwards, he was joined by his brothers, who brought news of Mīrzā Moḥammad Taqī's murder. With the principal family connection in Iran now severed, the three emigrated to Morshedabad, Bengal, where other relatives lived.

Life was not pleasant for Abu'l-Ḥasan in India, as he makes clear in the introduction to his only known work, *Moḡmal al-tawārīk-e ba'd-e Nāderīya*. He found Indian manners and mannerisms disconcertingly unfamiliar and withdrew more and more from social contacts. Apparently concerned by the reclusive life which Abu'l-Ḥasan was adopting, his brother, Sayyed Moḥammad Khan, suggested that he write a book about events in Iran. Work was begun in 1195/1781 and completed the following year. *Moḡmal al-tawārīk* is one of the most important contemporary accounts of the Iranian political scene from the death of Nāder Shah Afšār until the emergence of the Qajar dynasty. Between 1160 and 1169, Abu'l-Ḥasan himself participated in many of the events he describes and, in his own words, "was more or less cognizant of affairs in near and distant provinces." After emigrating to India, however, he was forced to rely on reports brought by other emigres; as a consequence, some of the chronology and the sequence of events for the period after 1169 have been disputed. In 1200/1785-86, a copy of the work came into the hands of Amīr Khan Kūhmarā'ī, who had been closely involved with the Zand court at Shiraz. Kūhmarā'ī added notes (published in the Tehran editions), in which he revised dates and accounts of which he had personal knowledge (e.g., the date of Karīm Khan's death, which he changed from 1191 to 1193). He also added information about Nāder Shah's reign and brought Abu'l-Ḥasan's chronology down to 1203/1789. According to Kūhmarā'ī, the author's narrative of events after Karīm Khan's death is confused, although he praises the accuracy of other portions of the work (Tehran, 1344 Š./1965, p. 344).

The work contains an account of events in Khorasan after Nāder Shah's death in 1160/1747 (including the brief reign in 1163/1750 of Mīr Sayyed Moḥammad, superintendent of the Rażawī shrine [see [Āstān-e Qods](#)] at Mašhad); a description of the campaigns of Aḡmad Shah Dorrānī in Khorasan



and India; and a detailed narrative of the complicated politics of western Iran between 1160 and 1196. The work concludes with 'Alī Morād Khan Zand's siege of Shiraz at the beginning of 1196/December, 1781-January, 1782. (For a detailed discussion of the sources, style, and tendencies of the work, see Modarres Rażawī's introduction to the Tehran editions.)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

Details of Abu'l-Ḥasan's life are found in *Moǧmal al-tawārīk* (see especially his own intro., pp. 1-6, and pp. 31, 139, 177-79, 233, 264-65, and 311 of the Tehran, 1344 Š./1965 ed.).

Additional information about the Golestāna family and its origins is provided by Modarres Rażawī in his introduction.

Further bibliographic information is given in Storey, I, p. 330; Storey-Bregel, pp. 931-33. Editions:

1. O. Mann, *Das Muǧmil et-tārīkh-i ba'dnâ-dirīje des Ibn Muḥammad Emīn Abu'l-Ḥasan aus Gulistāne, Fasc. I. Geschichte Persiens in den Jahren 1747-1750*, Leiden, 1891; *Fasc. II. Geschichte des Aḥmed Šâh Durrânî*, Leiden, 1896 (incomplete ed. representing approximately the first third of the original work and based on the Berlin manuscript).

2. Modarres Rażawī, *Moǧmal al-tawārīk pas az Nāder*, Tehran, 1320 Š./1941. (Complete ed., including the Kūhmarā'ī notes, based on a manuscript belonging to Mo'ayyed Ṭabetī).

3. Modarres Rażawī, *Moǧmal al-tawārīk*, Tehran, 1344 Š./1965 (complete ed., including the Kūhmarā'ī notes, based on the Ṭābetī manuscript and incorporating variant readings from the Berlin manuscript).