



## AFUŠTA'Ī NAṬANZI, MAḤMUD

**AFUŠTA'Ī NAṬANZI, MAḤMUD** b. Hedāyat-Allāh (b. ca. 1539; d. after 1599), Persian poet and historian whose chronicle, *Noqāwat al-āṭār fi dekr al-aqyār* (or *al-aqbār*; Bayzā'i, p. 62; Storey-Bregel, II, p. 866) deals with Safavid history from the death of Shah Ṭahmāsp I in 984/1576 up until the early years of the reign of Shah 'Abbās I.

*Life.* Little is known of Afušta'ī Naṭanzi's life and bureaucratic career. From his own remarks that at the time of writing the preface to his chronicle he was about sixty years old (Afušta'ī, p. 6), his date of birth can be assigned to the year 946/1539-40. His father, Hedāyat-Allāh, a bureaucrat from Afušta, a village outside Naṭanz, worked for the Safavid prince Ebrāhim Mirzā (d. 985/1577). During Ebrāhim Mirzā's tenure as governor of Mashhad (962-78/1555-71), Hedāyat-Allāh took up residence in Khorasan. When Ebrāhim Mirzā was demoted to governor of Sabzevār in 978/1571, Afušta'ī's father moved there along with his family and was granted a house outside the city walls (Afušta'ī Naṭanzi, p. 50; Ḥosayni Qomi, pp. 381, 567, 588).

Afušta'ī states that he completed his elementary studies under his father's guidance. Later on, he became interested in studying history (*qeṣaṣ o hekāyāt ... wa naql-e aqbār*) as well as Persian poetry. Afušta'ī makes a reference to his *diwān*, which consisted of five separate works of poetry titled *Majāziya*, *Gāyat al-majāz*, *Hāṣel al-ḥayāt*, *Ezṭerāriya*, and *Barā'at al-qalam* (Afušta'ī Naṭanzi, pp. 6-7). This *diwān* is yet to be found. Years later, he decided to devote his time to "the practice of history writing." He started composing his chronicle in the spring of 998/1590, shortly after the downfall of Ya'qub Khan Du'l-Qadr, the



unruly governor of Shiraz, and Shah 'Abbās' capture of [Eṣṭakr](#) Castle, some 35 miles northeast of Shiraz (Afušta'ī Naṭanzi, p. 7). Under Shah 'Abbās, Afušta'ī seems to have settled into a bureaucratic career of some standing, a post that enabled him to have access to and reproduce the contents of a number of government documents and royal correspondence in his chronicle (McChesney, pp. 104-5).

*Works.* Afušta'ī wrote the *Noqāwat al-āṭār* in the name of Shah 'Abbās. It is structured into two “volumes.” The first volume (pp. 1-245) covers the period spanning between the death of Shah Ṭahmāsp in the spring of 984/1576 and Shah 'Abbās' ascent to the throne in the summer of 995/1587, while the second volume chronicles the first twelve years of the reign of Shah 'Abbās. All the verses reproduced in Afušta'ī's chronicle were from his own pen (Afušta'ī Naṭanzi, pp. 8-11). In composing the *Noqāwat al-āṭār*, Afušta'ī relied heavily on his own reminiscences and observations. As mentioned above, he also reproduced the full-text of a dozen government documents and royal correspondence in his chronicle.

The opening part of Afušta'ī's narrative in volume one revolves around the outbreak of factional feuds in Qazvin in the wake of Shah Ṭahmāsp's demise as well as Shah [Esmā'il II](#)'s rise to power and the bloody purges that claimed the lives of almost all male members of the Safavid royal household. Then, he focuses on an anti-Safavid uprising in Šarvān during the months leading up to Esmā'il II's assassination in Qazvin, which took place on the night of 13 Ramaẓān 985/4 December 1577. Next, he deals with Moḥammad Ḳodābanda's enthronement in the winter of 985/1578 and the subsequent rise to power of his wife, Maryam Begum Mar'aši (pp. 44-73). In the section dealing with the reign of Moḥammad Ḳodābanda, the fall of Tabriz to the Ottomans, the Ottoman invasion of Qarābāḡ with military help from Crimean Tatars, the uprising of a false claimant to the Safavid throne in Kuhgiluya, and the outbreak of administrative chaos in Herat, Qandahar, and Mashhad have been dealt with closely. Afušta'ī's account of the reign of Moḥammad Ḳodābanda closes with a section on the civil war that preceded the assassination of the crown prince Ḥamza Mirzā and the subsequent enthronement of his younger brother, 'Abbās Mirzā, as Moḥammad Ḳodābanda's successor. His account of the civil wars is mainly focused on the events in ['Erāq-e 'Ajam](#), with special reference to Kashan and Isfahan.

The last “volume” of Afušta'ī's chronicle is about the opening decade of the reign of Shah 'Abbās. His account of these years permits a detailed



understanding of bloody purges in Qazvin in 995-96/1587-88, shortly after 'Abbās' ascent to the throne; the Uzbek invasion of Khorasan; Bektāš Khan Afšār's rebellion in Kerman and Yazd; Ya'qub Khan Du'l-Qadr's uprising in Fars; and the fall of the *Kār Kiā* ruler of *Lāhijān*, Aḥmad Khan (d. 1001/1593). The *Noqāwat al-āṭār* also contains a relatively long and detailed account of Shah 'Abbās' crackdown on the Noqṭawi demagogues in Qazvin and Isfahan. The closing chapters of the chronicle are of special historical value for Shah 'Abbās' transfer of the Safavid capital from Qazvin to Isfahan. Parts of his description of Shah 'Abbās' construction of royal buildings in Isfahan as well as his winter journeys to Isfahan are translated and published in English (McChesney, p. 106).

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