



## 'ALĀ'-AL-MOLK

'ALĀ'-AL-MOLK, MĪRZĀ MAḤMŪD KHAN DĪBĀ, son of Mīrzā 'Alī Aşğar Mostawfī, governor and minister in the later Qajar period (1258-1344/1842-1925). Born into a family of powerful 'olamā', the Ṭabāṭabā'ī sayyeds of Tabrīz, he went to Tiflis after ten years of elementary and traditional studies in Iran. Upon his return to Tabrīz, he entered the provincial administration and served there for two years. After government positions in Tehran, Tiflis, and again in Tabrīz, he entered the foreign ministry and was sent to London for six months. In 1290/1873 he went to Astrakhan to prepare for Nāşer-al-dīn Shah's arrival on his way to Europe; after proceeding to Moscow in the shah's entourage, he was entrusted with the task of arranging the return of the royal harem to Iran. Four years later, in 1294/1877, he was posted to Tiflis as consul general, and in the following year he was transferred to the legation at St. Petersburg as chargé d'affaires. In 1304/1887 he was appointed minister plenipotentiary to Russia. The title 'Alā'-al-molk was conferred on him after the death of its previous holder, Ḥājjī Mīrzā 'Abdallāh Khan. His service as minister to Russia lasted about three years. In Raġab, 1312/January, 1895 he was appointed to Istanbul (E'temād-al-salṭana, *Rūz-nāma-ye Kāṭerāt*, ed. Ī. Afşār, Tehran, 1345 Š./1966, p. 134). After six years in that post, he was recalled and made governor of Kermān, where he was very popular with the local populace; he investigated complaints personally and stopped abuses (Nāzem-al-Eslām Kermānī, *Tārīk-ebīdārī-e Īrānīān*, 2 vols., Tehran, 1346-49 Š./1967-70, intro., p. 168). He also negotiated frontier problems in Sīstān with the British Indian authorities. Several Europeans who met him during his governorship of Kermān spoke highly of him (M. Maḥmūd, *Tārīk-*



*erawābeṭ-e sīāsī-e Iran o Engelīs*, Tehran, 1328-33 Š./1949-54, VII, p. 1883). After his recall from Kermān he became minister of education and later served as minister of justice and governor of Isfahan for short periods. He was again appointed minister of justice in the cabinets of Atābak-e A'zam Amīn-al-solṭān (for four months in 1325/1907) and Moḥammad-Walī Khan Sepahsālār (for six months in 1334/1915-16). Following the shelling of the Majles in Jomādā I, 1326/June, 1908, he and Wakīl-al-molk were sent abroad by order of Moḥammad-'Alī Shah on a mission to obtain the views of other states about constitutionalism and the system of government in Iran (*Tārīk-ebīdārī* I, p. 254), but no doubt basically to announce Moḥammad-'Alī Shah's continued authority. After the assassination of Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah, it had been 'Alā'-al-molk who was given the task of arranging the deportation of Mīrzā Āqā Khan Kermānī, Shaikh Aḥmad Rūḥī, and Mīrzā Ḥasan Khan Ḳabīr-al-molk from Turkey. He attempted without success to prevent their execution (*Tārīk-ebīdārī*, intro., p. 15). Later, at considerable expense to himself, 'Alā'-al-molk arranged the printing of Kermānī's book, *Ā'īna-ye Eskandarī*.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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See also Bāmdād, *Rejāl* IV, pp. 39-42.

*Search terms:*

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