



## AMĪN LAŠKAR, MĪRZĀ QAHRAMĀN

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**AMĪN(-E) LAŠKAR, MĪRZĀ QAHRAMĀN QOMŠA'Ī EŞFAHĀNĪ** (1244-1310/1828-92), a middle rank Qajar official during the rule of Nāşer-al-dīn Shah. Born in Isfahan, where his father, Mīrzā Yūsof, was in the service of the Qajar notables, he was trained as a scribe (*mīrzā*) and became a minor accountant to 'Azīz Khan Mokrī about 1268/1851-52. After 'Azīz Khan was appointed commander in chief (*sardār-e koll*) of the Azarbaijan army and chief steward (*pīškār*) to the crown prince Moẓaffar-al-dīn Mīrzā (1277/1860-61), Mīrzā Qahramān was appointed chief of the provincial army secretariat (*ra'īs-e daftar-e laşkar*) with the title Moşīr(-e) Laşkar (1282/1865-66); two years later he became the *mostawfi-e neẓām* (chief revenue officer of the army) for the whole province, with the new title Amīn(-e) Laşkar. A capable bureaucrat and a shrewd manipulator, he also benefited from his position as private secretary and confidant to 'Azīz Khan. When the *sardār* was dismissed in 1285/1868-69, Mīrzā Qahramān was accused of embezzlement and arrested in Tabrīz on the order of the new *pīškār*, Ṭahmāsb Mīrzā Mo'ayyed-al-dawla. Charges were dropped when 'Azīz Khan agreed to pay the deficit, but this calculated gesture of chivalry did not save Mīrzā Qahramān from exile to Damāvand nor did it save his patron's amassed fortune from royal inroads. When 'Azīz Khan was reinstated two years later, Amīn Laşkar returned to Azarbaijan.

Following 'Azīz Khan's death in 1288/1871-72 and a brief period as head



steward to the crown prince, AmĪn Laškar began the second phase of his career in the capital. He was included in the shah's retinue during the first European tour (1290/1873) but joined the anti-Sepahsālār faction in the aftermath of the Reuter concession. Soon afterward he was appointed head of army supplies (*sarrešta-dār-e koll*) and received the ceremonial rank of *janāb*. Two years later, under the new government administration, he acquired the lucrative customs and excise monopoly, which was then reorganized by MĪrzā Ḥosayn Khan Mošĭr-al-dawla as the ministry of customs (*wezārat-e gomrokāt*). But his relations with Sepahsālār soon deteriorated, since AmĪn Laškar enjoyed the backing of MĪrzā Ḥosayn Khan's rival, MĪrzā Yūsof Mostawfĭ-al-mamālek. Except for another brief period as head steward to the crown prince in Azarbaijan (1296-97/1878-79), he maintained his control of customs until 1299/1881-82, when he was appointed to the ministry of public works (*fawā'ed-e āmma*). He is said to have written a travelogue during a trip with Nāšer-al-dĭn Shah to Khorasan in 1300/1882-83 (Monzawĭ, *Noskaha* VI, p. 4010). His generous gifts and lavish receptions provided him with new opportunities for advancement; in 1301/1884 while maintaining his ministerial post, he was granted the profitable supervision of the crown lands (*kālešajāt*) and shortly after was appointed to the government consultative council (*dār-al-šūrā-ye kobrā*). Although he reported corruption and fraud in army payments to Nāšer-al-dĭn Shah, his appointment to the chief army secretariat (*wezārat-e laškar-e koll*) was barred by the powerful minister of war, Prince Kāmṛān MĪrzā. It is likely that the same prince contributed to the final downfall of AmĪn Laškar. Charged with prodigality and misappropriation of crown revenues, AmĪn Laškar sought refuge with Ebrāhĭm Khan AmĪn-al-solṭān, who mediated on his behalf. Part of his liability was remitted, but his house was auctioned on orders of the shah to raise the balance. Bankrupt and disheartened, AmĪn Laškar saw his career end in 1305/1887-88. In a lengthy letter to the shah, he ventured to criticize MĪrzā 'Alĭ-Ašġar Khan AmĪn-al-solṭān as the main source of mischief and corruption in the affairs of the state, and this move cost him dearly. Despite a petition by ministers and officials, the shah banished him to Ardabĭl; it is likely that the shah's personal gain from AmĪn-al-solṭān's ever-growing monopolies was too great to allow any room for criticism. AmĪn Laškar died impoverished in Tehran in 1310/1892.



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