



‘ARAB MĪŠMAST

‘**ARAB MĪŠMAST**, an Arab tribe of Fārs, Tehran, and Khorasan. According to J. Morier, it was one of the “principal and purest” branches of the Arabs of Iran (“Iliyats,” p. 232). Sir J. Malcolm asserts that the Mīšmasts once belonged to the Jūmallī tribe and acquired their name, which means “rutting ewe” from a quarrel involving a sheep (*History II*, p. 146).

The Mīšmasts formerly dwelt in western Iran. Some of them migrated or were moved to what is now the *dehestān* of Pā’in Jām, between Torbat-e Jām and the Afghan border, more than 380 years ago, for Eskandar Beg alludes to them in his description of the events which occurred in 1007/1598-99 (p. 755). H. Field claims that these Mīšmasts have become a section of the Tīmūrī tribe (*Contributions*, p. 252). There is still a village in that district by the name of Mīšmast (Razmārā, *Farhang IX*, p. 414).

The Mīšmasts played a role of considerable importance in the time of Nāder Shah and during the period immediately following his death. Their leader, Amīr Khan, was the artillery commander of Nāder and his grandson, ‘Abd-al-‘Alī, was described by Malcolm as having been “a soldier of reputation, much esteemed by Nādir” (op. cit., p. 146). Upon the assassination of Nāder Shah, his nephew and successor ‘Ādel Shah, appointed Amīr Khan joint commander of the garrison at Kermānšāh, then second only to Isfahan as a political and military center. But shortly thereafter Amīr Khan switched his allegiance to ‘Ādel’s chief rival for power, Ebrāhīm Khan, who appointed him his artillery commander. Then, in summer 1162/1749, he sided with Nāder’s grandson, Šāhroḡ, in a rebellion against Ebrāhīm. As Amīr Khan left western Iran to



serve Šāhroḡ, ‘Abd-al-‘Alī Khan succeeded him as joint commander of the garrison at Kermānšāh. ‘Abd-al-‘Alī fought on behalf of ‘Alī Mardān Khan at the battle of N a hāvand, in May, 1752, and later withstood a prolonged siege by Moḡammad Khan Zand at Kermānšāh (1165-67/1752-53). In spring, 1166/1753 he surrendered to Karīm Khan Zand. However, in summer, 1753 he was rescued by Āzād Khan Afghan and offered his services to him. In 1757, his forces were defeated by the Qajars at Rūdsar, near Rašt. During this period (probably in the mid-1750s) he moved most of his tribe to Toršīz (today Kāšmar) in Khorasan at the invitation of his brother, Ḳalīl Khan, who had previously made himself master of that district (Abu’l-Ḥasan, *Das Muḡmil*, pp. 25, 29-31, 38-40, 54f.; Malcolm, op. cit., p. 146; J. R. Perry, *Karīm*, pp. 5, 6, 16, 34, 38-41, 51, 66, 305). In her list of the tribes of Iran, compiled in 1849, Lady Sheil estimated that there were some 4,000 houses and tents of Arabs in the district of Toršīz (*Glimpses*, p. 400). There is a small town 15 km west of Toršīz by the name of Ḳalīlābād which was probably called after Ḳalīl Khan.

As Karīm Khan Zand established himself in Shiraz, he moved some Mīšmasts (possibly the remainder of the tribe) from western Iran to Fārs. These included the Hodāvand section which, to judge by its name, was probably a Lur clan which had attached itself to the tribe. Most of these Mīšmasts were, in turn, transplanted to the Tehran region by Āḡā Moḡammad Qājār Khan (A. K. S. Lambton, *Landlord*, p. 142). In 1918, the Mīšmasts of Fārs comprised some 300 families and lived almost entirely in tents. Their principal villages were Fījān and Panīrān, a few miles north of Arsenjān (Field, op. cit., pp. 211, 223). According to M. Keyhān, in the early 1930s the Mīšmasts of Tehran numbered some 200 families (*Joḡrāfiā* II, p. 111). According to Razmārā, in 1328/1949 they numbered 711 persons (*Farhang* I, p. 29). They are tent-living nomads whose winter quarters are located in several villages south of Tehran and whose summer quarters are in the Alborz range, to the north of the capital (ibid., pp. 12, 16, 18, 29, 43, 45, 65, 71, 72, 150, 157, 158, 161, 165, 172, 176, 197, 210).

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