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ASB III. IN ISLAMIC TIMES

ASB

iii. In Islamic Times

The great importance of horses, which had been a feature of ancient Iran, did not lessen under the successive post-Islamic regimes. Horses were valued not only for their many practical uses but also because Islam bids Moslems to breed and keep them; in the words of the Qurʾān (8:62), “Have ready for them (the infidels) whatever you can in the way of force and relays of horses, so that God’s enemy and your enemy may be deterred thereby.” Also in the Qurʾān (100:1, *al-ʿĀdīyāt*), “chargers flashing sparks” (i.e., from their hoofs when at full gallop) are invoked in an oath. Many sayings and instructions about horses and the care of horses appear in the Hadith collections; see the lists under *ḵayl* and *faras* in A. J. Wensinck et al., *Concordances et indices de la tradition musulmane* (Moḥammad Foʾād ʿAbd-al-Bāqī, *al-Moʿǰam al-mofahras le-alfāẓ al-ḥadīṯ al-nabawī*, Leiden, 1955, II, pp. 103-05, V, pp. 100-06, 400, 403). One such Hadith states that “excellence is pinned on the foreheads of horses.”

Horses in warfare. Horses were used in military operations as the fastest and best means of conveyance until the invention of mechanical vehicles. Large numbers of Iranians took training in equitation and played polo for the purpose of acquiring skills needed in mounted warfare. The best classical Persian work on horsemanship, equestrian sports, and mounted warfare that has come down to us is *Ādāb al-ḥarb wa’l-šaǰāʿa*, written early in the 7th/13th century by Moḥammad b. Manṣūr Mobārakšāh known as Faḵr-e Modabber.

The book contains detailed advice, with illustrations, on good and bad points in a horse, ways of breaking and training a horse, proper styles of polo playing and types of polo field, battle procedures, javelin throwing on horseback, and appropriate means of controlling a horse in a lance charge or a sword combat. Names of inventors of these methods are mentioned. The author also gives particulars of rules laid down by Abū Moslem Ḵorāsānī (d. 137/754) for the protection of people's horses; anyone who ran off with another man's horse, stole its reins, saddle, or harness, undid its halter, foot-tether, or saddle-strap, let it escape from its stable at night and get lost, stuck thorns under its tail to make it throw its rider, untethered fierce horses, or let loose stallions to jump on mares or fight with other stallions, was to be severely punished, and in such cases no intercessions were to be heeded and absolutely no pardons were to be granted (*Ādāb al-ḥarb wa'l-šajāʿa*, pp. 462-64).

Horsemanship is described by the traveler Jean Chardin (1643-1713) as the third sport of the Iranians in the Safavid period. Proficiency therein consisted of the ability to mount a horse nimbly, give a horse free rein and stay firmly seated on its back at the gallop, pull up a galloping horse and bring it gently to a halt, and drop twenty beads in succession while riding and pick them up from the ground on the way back without stopping or slowing down. There were riders in Iran who had the nerve and agility to stand on the saddle and let the horse gallop at full tilt. Iranian riders usually sat somewhat aslant because they often had to wheel round in their exercises. These were of three kinds: polo, arrow shooting on horseback, and javelin throwing on horseback (Chardin, *Voyages*, English text *Travels in Persia*, ed. Sir Percy Sykes, London, 1927, pp. 199-200). Chardin then gives an example of the skill and agility of the Iranian mounted marksmen. For the target they would place a small cup (or an apple, a bowl filled with gold coins, etc.) on the top of a pillar 120 feet high and then shoot at it at full gallop; they also could hurl a long, heavy javelin as far away as 700 feet. According to Chardin, such shooting (*qapoq-andāzī*) exercises were regularly held in all Iranian cities. Kings took part in them, e.g., Shah Ṣafī (1038/1629-1052/1642), who was deft enough to hit the cup at the first or second shot, and Shah ʿAbbās II (1052/1642-1077/1666), who was also no mean performer (N. Falsafī, *Zendagānī-e Šāh ʿAbbās Awwal* II, Tehran, 1334 Š./1955, pp. 306-07).

Another royal feat of horsemanship is attributed to Loṭf-ʿAlī Khan Zand (d. 1209/1794). He is said to have escaped from the besieged city of Kermān by jumping on horseback over a trench eight *zaṛʿ* (8.32 m) in width, and on then

finding himself in his enemy's camp, to have escaped a second time by again jumping over the same trench and getting away by the road to Bam (Aḥmad ʿAlī Khan Wazīrī, *Tārīḵ-e Kermān*, ed. M. E. Bāstānī Pārīzī, Tehran, 1340 Š./1961, p. 366).

The failure of the Saljuq sultan Sanǰar (511/1118-552/1157) to escape capture by his enemies, the Ḡozz, is said to have been due either to the inadequacy of his riding skills or to the rawness of his horse (Faṭḥ b. ʿAlī Bondārī Eṣfahānī, *Taʾrīḵ dawla Āl Salǰūq*, ed. S. M. ʿAzzāwī, Cairo, 1394/1974, p. 259).

In peacetime horses belonging to kings were normally sent to grazing grounds outside the cities (Bayhaqī, p. 455). The keeping of hundreds or sometimes thousands of horses was a difficult and complex task for which a special department comprising veterinarians, trainers, grooms, and foragers had to be organized. Great importance was attached to veterinary science. The prince Kay Kāvūs b. Eskandar, writing in 475/1082, gives particulars of defects in horses and emphasizes the need to keep them in good condition (*Qābūs-nāma*, ed. Ḡ. -Ḥ. Yūsofī, Tehran, 1345 Š./1966, pp. 128-32), and the theologian Faḵr-al-dīn Rāzī (544/1149-606/1209) does the same in a section of his *Jāmeʿ al-ʿolūm* (ed. M. Ḥ. Tasbīḥī, Tehran, 1346 Š./1967, pp. 140-43). Diseases of horses and appropriate treatments take up a large part of *Ādāb al-ḥarb wa'l-šaǰāʿa* and a chapter of the book by Šams-al-dīn Moḥammad Āmolī (ca. 740/1339) entitled *Nafāʾes al-fonūn fī ʿarāʾes al-ʿoyūn* (ed. Ḥāǰǰ Mīrzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Šaʿrānī, Tehran, 1379/1959, III, pp. 345-48).

The chief official responsible for royal horses was called the *āḵor-sālār* or *amīr-e āḵor* (cf. *Šāh-nāma*, ed. Borūḵīm, VII, p. 1929, vv. 168-69) under the Samanids (204/819-395/1005), Ghaznavids (387/997-547/1152), and Saljuqs of Iran and Rūm (429/1037-707/1307); *āḵoṛčī* or *āḵor beg* under the Mongols (616/1219-736/1336); *mīr-āḵor-bāšī* under the Safavids (907/1501-1135/1722); and *amīr-e āḵor* or *mīr-āḵor* under the Qajars (1193/1779-1342/1924). In addition to the men who kept the horses, many more engaged in making saddles, harness such as reins, bits, and stirrups, horseshoes, and horse armor. Thus in every period the number of men needed to maintain a cavalry force ready for war was very large; for example, under the Daylami ruler ʿAżod-al-dawla (d. 373/982), 1,800 men were permanently employed to look after and provide for the horses (Mofīżallāh Kabīr, *Māhīgīrān-e tāǰdār yā tārīḵsāzān-e īrānī*, tr. M. Afšār, Tehran, 1362 Š./1983, p. 223). Other designations of officials in charge of horses in the Mongol period were *būz aḵtāčī*(responsible for gray horses) and *qašḡā aḵtāčī* (responsible for horses with white foreheads) (Š.

Šarīk-e Amīn, *Farhang-e eṣṭelāḥāt-e dīvānī-e dawran-e Mogōl*, Tehran, 1357 Š./1978, pp. 75 and 186 respectively; see also Aḵtājī). In the Qajar period, particularly under Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah, the official in charge of harness procurement, called the *zīndār-bāšī* (chief saddle keeper), was a courtier of high standing. The office of *mīr-āḵor* also carried prestige and was held by royal princes or, at one time, by a son-in-law of the heir apparent, Moẓaffar-al-dīn Mīrzā (Ḡolām-Ḥosayn Afżal-al-molk, *Afżal-al-tawārīḵ*, ed. M. Etteḥādīya and S. Saʿdvandīān, Tehran, 1361 Š./1982, pp. 38, 46; Dūst-Moḥammad Moʿayyer-al-mamālek, *Yāddāšthā-ī az zendagānī-e ḵoṣūṣī-e Nāṣer-al-dīn Šāh*, Tehran, 1327 Š./1948, pp. 68, 72; Moḥammad-ʿAlī Ḡaffārī, *Tārīḵ-e Ḡaffārī*, ed. M. Etteḥādīya and S. Saʿdvandīān, Tehran, 1361 Š./1982, p. 299).

In the reign of Moḥammad Reżā Shah Pahlavī, equestrian interests were promoted and supervised by a Royal Horse Society (*Anǰoman-e Salṭanatī-e Asb*) under the honorary chairmanship of the Crown Prince. Its purposes were to "preserve, propagate, and improve native Iranian breeds, make them known in foreign countries by holding horse shows in Iran and participating in horse shows and sales abroad, create popular interest in the protection and care of horses, promote and develop equestrian sports, and define and register Iranian breeds and issue identity certificates" (*Maǰalla-ye asb* 1, Tehran, Ordībehešt 1353 Š./April-May 1974, p. 5).

The costs of keeping, training, and breeding horses were normally borne by rulers, but are known to have been shifted onto the people at certain times. Under the Saljuqs and the atabegs, fief-holders (*eqṭāʿdārān*) took money from the peasantry in wartime to pay expenses of horseshoeing and harness procurement required for discharge of their obligations to the ruler (N. V. Pigulevskaya and I. P. Petrushevskiĭ, tr. K. Kešāvarz, *Tārīḵ-e Īrān*, Tehran, 1353 Š./1974, p. 284). In the Mongol period, horses for the hordes were taken at the rate of one out of every hundred owned (Rašīd-al-dīn Faẓlallāh, *Tārīḵ-e mobārak-e ḡāzānī*, ed. K. Jahn, the Hague, 1957, p. 283). In Nāder Shah's reign (1148/1736-1160/1747), fodder for the horses and other needs of the cavalry were requisitioned from the people (K. Z. Ašrafīān and M. R. Arunova, *Dawlat-e Nāder Šāh Afšār*, tr. Ḥ. Amīn, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1356 Š./1977, p. 85).

Horses at royal courts. Military need was not the only reason for the tradition of keeping horses at Iranian royal courts. One or more horses, ready to be mounted at any time, usually as "duty" (*nawbatī*) horses, were always kept at governmental establishments. Neẓāmī ʿArūżī (d. 552/1157) states in his *Čahār maqāla* (ed. M. Moʿīn, Tehran, 1333 Š./1954, p. 53) that the Samanid amir Naṣr

b. Aḥmad was so stirred on hearing Rūdakī sing a poem that he forthwith set foot on the stirrup of a *nawbatī* horse and rode back to his capital, Bukhara. There are also mentions of the use of *nawbatī* horses under the Ghaznavids (Bayhaqī, p. 908) and in other periods.

In addition, a body of picked cavalrymen was always kept in readiness to protect the court. Ḵᵛāja Neẓām-al molk, writing in the Saljuq period (*Sīar al-molūk* or *Sīāsat-nāma*, ed. H. Darke, 3rd ed., Tehran, 1341 Š./1962, p. 125), recommended that "there should always be at the court two hundred men of fine appearance and physique, all good horsemen and fully equipped, so that if ever an emergency arose, they would not fail in whatever task might befall them." Jengis Khan (d. 624/1126) is said to have had a guard of 10,000 cavalrymen on constant patrol (Pigulevskaya and Petrushevskiĭ, op. cit., tr. Kešāvarz, p. 32). In Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah's reign, 1,000 horsemen were stationed at the Kašīk-ḵāna (a cavalry barracks) to guard the court and escort the Shah on tours (Moʿayyer-al-mamālek, op. cit., p. 46).

In both wartime and peacetime, kings took with them on campaigns or journeys spare horses called *kotal* or *ǰonaybat* for use in case of need. Masʿūd Ḡaznavī had fifty spare horses around the elephant he was mounting in his battle with the Saljuqs (Bayhaqī, p. 759) and on another expedition took with him thirty horses which had trappings studded with turquoise, jasper, and the like (ibid., p. 372). Sometimes the spare horses were also used in official ceremonies (ibid., p. 355).

Making gifts of horses by way of reward or inducement was customary in all periods. At presentation ceremonies, the gift horses were caparisoned with splendid saddles and trappings of a cost proportionate to the status of the giver and the receiver. They might even be shod with golden horseshoes, as were those which the governor ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā b. Māhān (d. 193/809) sent as a gift from Khorasan to the caliph Hārūn al-Rašīd; according to Bayhaqī (p. 538), "after the elephants they brought twenty horses with gold-trimmed saddles, gold-plated horseshoes, and trappings studded with jewels (i.e. rubies) from Badaḵšān and turquoises, as well as horses of the Gīlān breed and two hundred Ḵorāsānī horses with brocade saddle-cloths" (ibid., p. 538). The horses which Masʿūd Ḡaznāvī presented to the caliph Qāʾem were similarly rigged out (ibid., p. 471). The Saljuq sultan Ṭoḡrel I sent to the same caliph "thirty Turkish slave-boys and slave-girls mounted on thirty horses and accompanied by two of his servants, each of whom rode a horse with golden stirrups and a jewel-adorned saddle" (Bondārī, op. cit., p. 20). When the

Safavid Shah Ṭahmāsb decided to give refuge to Homāyūn, the Mughal ruler of India, in 950/1544, he sent him (i.e., Homāyūn) one hundred swift horses (*asb-e be-daw*) with gold-trimmed saddles. He also sent him six steady-going, nice-colored, strong-bodied horses picked from his own stables. On their backs were saddles inlaid with lapis lazuli and cloths interwoven and embroidered with gold thread. With each of these horses two attendants were sent (ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Navāʾī, *Šāh Ṭahmāsb ṣafawī*, Tehran, 1350 Š./1971, p. 54). After Nāder Shah's victorious campaign in India, his son Naṣrallāh Mīrzā was married to an Indian princess, and on the wedding day four horses with jewel-studded trappings were brought forth for the prince (Mīrzā Mahdī Khan Astarābādī, *Tārīḵ-e ǰahāngošā-ye nāderī*, ed. S. ʿA. Anwār, Tehran, 1341 Š./1962, p. 332). Nāder subsequently sent to the Indian ruler a return gift of horses which his other son Reżā-qolī Mīrzā had procured (op. cit., p. 345; another occasion mentioned on p. 383). In 1145/1732 twelve thousand horses were sent to Nāder as gifts from Arab tribes (Ašrafīān and Arunova, op. cit., p. 84). The custom of presenting gift horses continued into the Qajar period (Ḡaffārī, op. cit., p. 29, 293).

In the reigns of the Ghaznavid sultans Maḥmūd and Masʿūd, it was customary after the appointment of a person to a high office that masters of ceremonies should call out, "Let the horse of the amir of such and such a place be brought forth," the purpose being to publicize the appointment and glorify the appointee. There are several mentions of this in Bayhaqī's history (e.g., pp. 158, 159, 355, 373, 526; see also Ḥ. Anwarī, *Eṣṭelāḥāt-e dīvanī-e dawra-ye ḡaznavī wa saljūqī*, Tehran, 2535=1355 Š./1976, pp. 16-18).

The game of polo was considered to be both a sport and a form of cavalry training, because it enabled the players to learn how to control themselves and their horses in different situations. In the words of Mobārak-šāh, "wielding the polo-stick has been likened to fighting and beating the foe" (*Ādāb al-ḥarb wa'l-šaǰāʿa*, p. 467). The game was in particularly great vogue during the Samanid, Ghaznavid, Saljuq, and Safavid periods. A chapter of *Ādāb al-ḥarb wa'l-šaǰāʿa* is devoted to proper ways of training polo horses, playing matches, and galloping after the ball. In the Safavid period the Iranians played this game in a large square, at each end of which stood pillars, set close together, which were the goal posts. The ball was thrown into the middle of the square, and the players, each holding a stick, galloped after it. To be able to hit it, they had to bend down lower than the pommels of their saddles, as the sticks were short. It was a rule of the game that the ball must be

hit at the gallop. A win was scored when the ball was driven between the goal posts. The game was played with opposing teams of fifteen or twenty men. Shah ʿAbbās I had a passion for polo, playing it himself and often entertaining his guests with a game played by the *qezelbāš* cavalrymen (Falsafī, op. cit., pp. 304-06).

From ancient until quite recent times, horses were used in hunting. Particularly for hunting fierce animals and swift animals such as gazelles, horses were considered indispensable (Bayhaqī, pp. 232, 529, 651). The amir Kay Kāvūs gives some relevant advice in the *Qābūs-nāma* (ed. Yūsofī, p. 50): "Riding, hunting, and polo playing are gentlemanly activities, especially when one is young. Masʿūd Ḡaznavī had been fond of lion hunting on horseback (Bayhaqī, p. 150), and Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah Qāǰār was to win a reputation for skill in gazelle hunting at the gallop (Moʿayyer-al-mamālek, op. cit., pp. 35, 80). Faḵr-al-dawla, a daughter of Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah, used to gallop with a gun in one hand and shoot birds such as starlings and pigeons (ibid., p. 50).

Equestrian sports were keenly pursued for the sake of pleasure and exercise as well as military training. Under the Qajars, particularly Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah, horse races and riding competitions were attended by the shah to the accompaniment of much pomp, and lavish prizes of as much as 150 or 200 *tūmān*s on some occasions were awarded to winners (Afżal-al-molk, op. cit., pp. 65-66; for a more detailed description see Moʿayyer-al-mamālek, op. cit., pp. 69-73). Horse races and jumping contests were held regularly in Reżā Shah Pahlavī's reign (1304-20 Š./1925-41) and on a larger and grander scale in that of Moḥammad Reżā Shah Pahlavī (detailed reports available in issues of *Maǰalla-ye asb*).

Until well into the modern period, the fastest means of carrying travelers, messages, and goods was by horse. Ancient and later rulers of Iran, whose control of distant provinces depended on rapid communication, were always interested in the use of horses to bring intelligence reports and convey dispatches and orders. Some, but not all, maintained a regular postal service. Under the Ghaznavids a special department (*dīvān*) headed by a chief postmaster (*ṣāheb-e barīd*) supervised the business of rapid message transmission (Bayhaqī, p. 649) and employed fast-riding couriers to bring reports and letters to the central and provincial authorities (ibid., p. 323); but there were apparently not then any staging posts, because the couriers often had to take four horses with them when they set out in order to be able to change their mounts from time to time (ibid., p. 7). If Neẓāmī ʿArūżī is to be

believed, the *dīvān-e barīd* was scrapped by the Saljuqs who had no knowledge of statecraft (*Čahār maqāla*, p. 40); but according to Bondārī (op. cit., p. 62), it was only suspended for a time in Alp Arslān's reign. When Baghdad was under the control of the Buyid prince ʿAżod-al-dawla, the staging posts were so well organized that letters from Shiraz to Baghdad (about 900 km) reached their destination in seven days (Mofīżallāh Kabīr, op. cit., p. 90). Neẓām-al-molk recommended that couriers should be stationed at intervals on certain main roads so that reports could be conveyed over fifty parasangs in a single day and night (*Sīāsat-nāma*, p. 17).

When the Mongols ruled Iran, a more extensive postal system was organized to cover their far-flung empire; *yām*s (staging posts), which they called "*tāyān māh*," were established in all the dominions (Rašīd-al-dīn Fażlallāh, *Jāmeʿ al-tawārīḵ* II, ed. E. Blochet, Leiden, 1911, p. 49). These *yām*s were located every four, or sometimes three, parasangs; in a few cases there were thirty-seven *yām*s in every five parasangs (loc. cit.). The number of horses kept at a *yām* ranged from 15 to 500 (idem, op. cit., ed. ʿA. ʿA. ʿAlīzāda, Moscow, 1965, III, pp. 359, 483; idem, *Tārīḵ-emobārak-e ḡāzānī*, ed. K. Jahn, p. 273). The officer in charge was called the *yāmčī*(Šarīk-e Amīn, op. cit., pp. 261, 262). According to Clavijo, all along the road from Tabrīz to Samarqand, Tīmūr had built staging posts at a day's, or sometimes half a day's, distance from each other, where horses were kept ready to depart at any time. At some of these staging posts 100 horses were stabled, at others only 50, at a few of them 200 (Clavijo, *Embassy*, Pers. tr. M. Raǰab-nīā, Tehran, 1337 Š./1958, p. 163). If an ambassador was traveling to Samarqand and his horse became incapacitated, he would be entitled to demand the horse of any passing rider, who would be obliged to hand it over to him. "If anyone refused to give his horse, his head would have been at risk" (op. cit., p. 186).

Surviving documents show that in Nāder Shah's reign the common people, particularly cultivators of state-owned (*ḵāleṣa*) lands, were forced to supply post horses or pay cash equivalents (Ašrafīān and Arunova, op. cit., p. 83).

The convoy of mounted mail-carriers (singular *čāpār*) and the post office-cum-stable (*čāpār-ḵāna*) endured throughout the Qajar period. The *čāpār*s rode from Kāšān to Tehran in one day (Ḡaffārī, *Tārīḵ*, pp. 38, 61, 153, 288).

Horses in Persian literature. The importance of horses in the life of the Iranians assured them of a special place in Persian literature. Numerous poets, such as Rūdakī (d. 329/940), ʿOnṣorī (d. 431/1039), Manūčehrī (d. 432/1040-41),

Masʿūd-e Saʿd-e Salmān (d. 515/1121), Lāmeʿī Gorgānī (d. ca. 500/1106), Kamāl-al-dīn Esmāʿīl Eṣfahānī (d. 635/1237), and in later times Qāʾānī Šīrāzī (d. 1270/1853), and Īraǰ Mīrzā (d. 1305 Š./1926), have left poems in praise of or, occasionally, ridicule of horses, sometimes with interesting observations about good and bad points in a horse (e.g., Rūdakī, *Dīvān*, ed. Y. Braginsky, Moscow, 1964, p. 46; ʿOnṣorī, *Dīvān*, ed. M. Dabīrsīāqī, Tehran, 1342 Š./ 1963, pp. 132-34; Masʿūd-e Saʿd Salmān, *Dīvān*, ed. R. Yāsemī, Tehran, 1339 Š./1960, pp. 314, 564; Lāmeʿī Gorgānī, *Dīvān*, ed. M. Dabīrsīāqī, Tehran, 1353 Š./1974, pp. 12-14; Kamāl-al-dīn Esmāʿīl Eṣfahānī, *Dīvān*, ed. Ḥ. Baḥr-al-ʿolūmī, 1348 Š./1969, pp. 457, 467-468, 633; Qāʾānī, *Dīvān*, ed. M. J. Maḥǰūb, Tehran, 1336 Š./ 1957, p. 502; Īraǰ Mīrzā, *Dīvān*, ed. M. J. Maḥǰūb, Tehran, 1353 Š./1974, pp. 7, 8). In the *Ḵosrow o Šīrīn* of Neẓāmī Ganǰavī (d. 605/1209) there is a beautifully told account of a polo game which Šīrīn and some maidens played with Ḵosrow Parvēz (ed. Ḥ. Pežmān Baḵtīārī, Tehran, 1343 Š./1964, p. 85). Parables and comparisons involving horses are frequent in mystic works. In the *Elāhī-nāma* of Farīd-al-dīn ʿAṭṭār (d. 618/1221 ?) there is a story of a woman who fell in love with a king's son. The king ordered that because of her love for the prince, her hair should be tied to the leg of an unruly horse so that she might suffer a nasty death (a form of punishment related in many folk tales). Shortly before the sentenced woman was due to die in this way, she uttered her last wish, begging the king to cause her hair to be tied to the leg of her beloved's horse so that she might be killed by her beloved and thus attain eternal bliss (*Elāhī-nāma*, ed. F. Rūḥānī, Tehran, 1339 Š./1960, pp. 40-44; tr. J. A. Boyle, *The Ilāhī-nāma or Book of God*, Manchester, 1976, pp. 47-49). Horses appear in other stories of the *Elāhī-nāma* (ed. Rūḥānī, pp. 87-89, 190; tr. Boyle, pp. 104-05, 223-24) and the *Moṣībat-nāma* (ed. Nūrānī Weṣāl, Tehran, 1338 Š./1959, pp. 258-59, 353). In the *Maṯnawī* of Mawlawī Jalāl-al-dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273), human instincts and appetites are likened to an unruly horse (ed. R. A. Nicholson, VI, p. 338), and a story is told about a Ḵᵛārazmšāh's infatuation with the beauty of a horse and the quenching of this passion by his vizier who pointed out the horse's defects (op. cit., VI, pp. 463-72). The comparison of human sensuality to an unruly horse is a long-standing motif of Islamic Sufism. The Arabic word *rīāda* (Persian *rīāżat*) signifying self repression, or the effort to transform lusts into virtues and to refine the soul through the endurance of hardships originally meant the breaking and training of horses (Qoṭb-al-dīn Abu'l-Moẓaffar Manṣūr b. Ardašīr ʿAbbādī, *al-Taṣfīa fī aḥwāl al-motaṣawwefa*, ed. Ḡ. -Ḥ. Yūsofī, Tehran, 1347 Š./1968, pp. 54-59).

Names of types of horses and terms for their qualities and their equipment

were recorded in a number of special glossaries, e.g. *al-Bolḡa* by Adīb Yaʿqūb Kordī Nīšāpūrī (ed. M. Mīnovī and F. Ḥarīṛčī, Tehran, 1355 Š./1976, pp. 172-85) and *al-Sāmī fi'l-asāmī* by Abu'l-Fatḥ Aḥmad b. Moḥammad Maydānī (offset, Tehran, 1345 Š./1966, pp. 266-80).

Customs connected with horses. Only a few of the many reports of such customs from different periods can be mentioned here. In the Ghaznavid period when men of substance were arrested, it was customary to humiliate them by mounting them on mules instead of horses (Bayhaqī, pp. 306, 328). Dismounting was a conventional gesture of respect. Bondārī (op. cit., p, 10) relates that "ʿAmīd-al-molk was waiting for an interview with the caliph's vizier. As soon as he saw him he tried to dismount, but the (caliph's) vizier stopped him, and they embraced while still on horseback."

In the Saljuq period, a man wanting to show deference would often refrain from riding his own horse and ride a spare horse belonging to the revered dignitary instead (ibid., p. 118).

Another gesture of humility was to kiss the hoof of a dignitary's horse (ibid. p. 53). It was a sign of great respect for a person to walk on foot behind that person's horse (ibid., pp. 53, 118; Ḡaffārī, op. cit., p. 68). Mawlawī Rūmī's son Solṭān Walad walked behind Šams Tabrīzī's horse all the way from Damascus to Konya (Solṭān Walad, *Walad-nāma*, ed. J. Homāʾī, Tehran, 1315 Š./1936, pp. 48-49).

When the Mongols ruled Iran, they had a custom whereby they took their sons at the age of about five and sat them on a "fortune horse" (*asb-e dawlat*), then made the horse face eastward and sprayed koumiss onto its mane and hindquarters. They believed that these actions would secure their sons from misfortunes (ʿAbd-al-Razzāq Samarqandī, *Maṭlaʿ-e saʿdayn wa maǰmaʿ-e baḥrayn*, ed. ʿA. Navāʾī, Tehran, 1353 Š./1974, p. 20).

In the reign of Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah Qāǰār, it was customary to celebrate the Feast of Sacrifices (ʿĪd-e Qorbān) with the public slaughter of a camel and distribution of its meat. The feast was announced three days in advance by a troop of twelve cavalrymen who would ride through the streets yelling to the people that the camel slaughter would take place. At their head rode a royal prince of fiercely warlike appearance, wearing armor and a helmet and holding a large shield. The horses were decked with beads and tassels of many colors, and each had a piece of cloth like a shawl and a fine-toned bell hanging

from its neck (Moʿayyer-al-mamālek, op. cit., p. 61).

The etiquette of the Qajar period required that when the shah or an important dignitary went out on horseback, other men should not ride parallel with him but should always be at least a few feet behind his horse. A rider once let his horse come too close to the crown prince's horse, and a courtier who saw this disrespectful act shouted, "Keep back! Ride properly" (Ḡaffārī, op. cit., pp. 84, 124).

In the later years of the Qajars, men claiming to be victims of gross injustice would shut themselves up in stables belonging to the shah or a high dignitary as a means to publicize their grievances (ibid., pp. 206, 298).

Horses in passion plays. Horses have always played an essential part in passion plays, *taʿzīa* or *šabīh-ḵᵛānī*, in commemoration of Imam Ḥosayn's martyrdom, being needed for the reenactment of events at Karbalā and other scenes. The grandest *taʿzīa* performances took place in the Qajar period in the presence of Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah. The start of one of them has been described as follows: "Into the arena rode a troop of lancers, mounted on the Shah's finest horses, holding fifes which had red barrels, gold mouthpieces, and braid frills. The horses were resplendent with gold trappings and golden balls hanging on silk cords strung around their necks. Following the lancers came mounted macebearers and guards with golden maces on their shoulders as custom prescribed. The actors, wearing clothes appropriate for their parts, then entered on horseback, and the play began" (Moʿayyer-al-mamālek, op. cit., p. 66).

Breeds of horses. In most of the *faras-nāma*s, merits and demerits of horses are judged by tangible criteria, physical and behavioral shortcomings and the like, without consideration of the breed; but in a few of them (e.g., *Faras-nāma* No. 2179, Ketāb-ḵāna-ye Maǰles-e Šūrā-ye Mellī and ms. belonging to Dr. Ḥasan Sādāt-e Nāṣerī (chaps. 14 and 15), and *Faras-nāma-ye Mīrzā Neẓām*), breeds are mentioned and described. According to these works, the breeds consisted of:

1. Arab horses, regarded as the finest and fastest and classified as a. *ʿatīq* (born of an Arab father by an Arab mother), b. *haǰīn* (born of an Arab father by a non-Arab mother), c. *moqref* (born of a non-Arab father by an Arab mother). 2. Kurdish horses, regarded as having greater power of endurance than Arab horses. 3. Turkish horses, also called *kūhī* or *dāḡī*, i.e., fit for use in

mountainous country (Ar.*berḏawn*), regarded as more patient and surefooted than other horses but smaller. In some of the historical works a few more breeds, such as Gīlī (i.e., from Gīlān), Ḵorāsānī, and Torkmanī or Torkmānī horses, are mentioned (Bayhaqī, p. 538; ʿA. N. Behrūzī, *Laṭāʾef o ẓarāʾef-e adabī*, Shiraz, 1342 Š./1963. pp. 14, 15; Moʿayyer-al-mamālek, op. cit., p. 35).

*Faras-nāma*s. Books dealing solely with horses constitute a special genre of Persian literature, the *faras-nāma*. To meet the demand, particularly from court circles, for information about breeding, training, and caring for horses, *faras-nāma*s were written in both verse and prose. Among the known manuscripts, two are in verse and the rest in prose. None of these manuscripts are dated earlier than the Safavid period, but some contain statements that the authors got their material from older *faras-nāma*s. The number of *faras-nāma*s written in Persian was very large. Below is a list of some important manuscripts and editions:

1. A short *faras-nāma* in prose, said by its writer to be translated from a work by Aristotle; in collection ms. 966 at the Ketāb-ḵāna-ye Mellī, Tehran; 2. a *faras-nāma*mainly on veterinary matters and recognition of ages of horses, said to have been written by Qanbar, the freed slave of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭāleb; in the Ḵalīl Āḡā Library, Cairo; 3. *faras-nāma* ms. 2179 in the Ketāb-ḵāna-ye Maǰles-e Šūrā-ye Mellī, Tehran; 4. *faras-nāma* ms. 2180 in the Ketāb-ḵāna-ye Maǰles-e Šūrā-ye Mellī. 5. a *faras-nāma* by Mīrzā Neẓām, a son of Mollā Ṣadrā; ms. in the Ketāb-ḵāna-ye Mellī; 6. Several manuscript *faras-nāma*s in the Ketāb-ḵāna-ye Malek and Ketāb-ḵāna-ye Markazī of Tehran University; 7. a manuscript *faras-nāma* belonging to Prof. Sayyed Ḥasan Sādāt-e Nāṣerī of Tehran University; 8. a versified *faras-nāma* by a writer with the pen-name Ṣafī, in a collection at the Ketāb-ḵāna-ye Mellī; 9. Part of another versified *faras-nāma*, in a collection at the Ketāb-ḵāna-ye Mellī; 10. two Persian *faras-nāma*s printed in India in 1910 and 1911 respectively, the first entitled *Faras-nāma-ye hāšemī*, a Persian treatise translated from Sanskrit by ʿAbdallāh Khan Bahādor Fīrūz Jang (ed. D. C. Phillott, Calcutta, 1910); 11. *Ṭohfat al-ṣadr* or *Faras-nāma-ye Zabardast Ḵān* (ed. D. C. Phillott, Calcutta, 1911). Nos. 3 and 7 have been edited by the writer of this article for publication by the Institute of Islamic Studies of McGill University, Montreal (Tehran Branch). Also Mobārakšāh's valuable *Ādāb al-ḥarb wa'l-šaǰāʿa* (see above) which may be regarded as a sort of *faras-nāma*.

In substance a *faras-nāma* is a small encyclopedia of facts relating to horses. The contents usually include a preface explaining the importance of horses, with quotations of Koranic verses, sayings of the Prophet Moḥammad, and

relevant reports and anecdotes, followed by chapters on the recognition of a horse's age by its teeth; nomenclature of horses of different types and colors; good and bad qualities of horses and indications of their presence or absence; shortcomings of horses and ways to rectify them; proper methods of breeding, training, controlling, and caring for horses; and, most important of all, ill health in horses, with prescriptions of treatments and drugs appropriate for different diseases and injuries.

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