



BASSĀM-E KORD

BASSĀM-e KORD, the Kharijite (fl. mid-3rd/9th century), one of the first poets in the New Persian language, active at the court of the Saffarids. The epithet “Kord” (spelled Kūrd in the *Tārīk-e Sīstān*) apparently meant “shepherd” and does not seem to have any connection with the western Iranian tribes who came to be known as the Kurds. Bassām had belonged to the Kharijite faction in Sīstān, against whom the Saffarid Ya‘qūb b. Layṭ (d. 265/878) fought at the start of his career, finally defeating them and killing their leader ‘Ammār in 251/865. Some time after this battle, Bassām and several other Kharijites approached Ya‘qūb for peace. After joining Ya‘qūb’s retinue, Bassām, who was a cultured man (*adīb*), followed the example set by Moḥammad b. Waṣīf Sīstānī, Ya‘qūb’s secretary, in writing poetry in Persian. Five verses of his poem congratulating Ya‘qūb on his defeat of the Kharijites and ‘Ammār’s death are preserved in the *Tārīk-e Sīstān*.

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