



DĀĠESTĀNĪ, FATHĠ 'ALĪ KHAN

DĀĠESTĀNĪ, fathĠ-'alġ khan b. Alqāṣ Mīrzā b. Ildirim Khan Šamkāl, grand vizier (*wazīr-e a'zam*, *e'temād-al-dawla*) under Shah Solṭān-Ḥosayn I Šafawī (1105-35/1694-1722). In this office he was one of the successors to Mīrzā Moḥammad-Ṭāher Qazvīnī "Waḥīd" (Hedāyat, VIII, p. 505), who retired from office because of his great age and failing health and died in 1110/1698-99 (see Dehqān in Qazvīnī, pp. 1920; cf. *Taḍkerat al-molūk*, ed. Minorsky, p. 65 n. 1: "seems to have retired in 1120/1708 (?)"). The date of FathĠ-'Alī Khan's appointment to the vizierate is not recorded, but, according to Laurence Lockhart (p. 119), it must have been around 1127/1715. He was certainly in office in 1129/1717, when A. P. Volynskii arrived in Isfahan on a mission for Tsar Peter the Great of Russia (Lockhart, p. 105).

FathĠ-'Alī Khan came from a noble Lezgī family and was, like most Lezgīs, a Sunnite (Lockhart, pp. 117, 120). In 1131/1719 the Lezgīs invaded Šīrvān and killed the governor of that province, then invaded Georgia, thus setting in motion a series of events that eventually brought about FathĠ-'Alī Khan's downfall the following year. Wakhtang VI, who had just been reinstated as king of Kartli and governor of Georgia by Shah Solṭān-Ḥosayn, mustered a large army in the summer of 1132/1720, with the intention of driving the Lezgīs out of Georgia. This move coincided with the germination of a plot by FathĠ-'Alī Khan's enemies at court to overthrow him. The leaders of this conspiracy were the *mollā-bāšī* (chief theologian) Moḥammad-Ḥosayn, who disliked FathĠ-'Alī Khan "mainly because he was a Sunni" (Lockhart, p. 117), and the *ḥakīm-bāšī* (chief physician) Raḥīm Khan. These men showed the shah



a forged letter as evidence that FathĀlĪ Khan had been plotting with a Kurdish chief to assassinate him. They further reminded the shah that FathĀlĪ Khan's daughter was married to Wakhtang's half-brother Rostam Khan, the *qollar-āqāsī* (head of the royal *golāms*) and suggested that a victorious Wakhtang would be a greater danger to Persia than would the Lezgīs. They persuaded the shah to order Wakhtang not to launch his offensive against the Lezgīs; at their behest he also ordered the *qūrčī-bāšī* (lit., "commander of the *qūrčīs*"), Moḥammadqolī Khan, to put FathĀlĪ Khan to death (7 Šafar 1133/8 December 1720; Lockhart, pp. 117-20). The *qūrčī-bāšī*, himself a party to the plot, did not put the vizier to death; rather, hoping to extract from him by torture the wealth for which he was celebrated, he blinded him. At the same time, the vizier's nephew, brother-in-law (Āṣaf, p. 91 n. 1; cf. *Chronicle* I, p. 556 n. 2), or paternal uncle (Bāstānī Pārīzī, pp. 332-33) LoṭfĀlĪ Khan was arrested and thrown into jail. Shah Solṭān-Ḥosayn is said later to have felt remorse at his treatment of FathĀlĪ Khan; nevertheless, he considered it inexpedient to allow him to remain in Tehran and dispatched him to Shiraz, where he died in jail at an indeterminate date (Āṣaf, p. 92 n.).

During FathĀlĪ Khan's tenure as vizier problems in the Persian Gulf tested his diplomatic skills on a number of occasions. The Dutch envoy to Persia, Joan Josua Ketelaar, reached Isfahan in May 1717 and asked FathĀlĪ Khan for renewal of the rights and privileges granted to the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Dutch East Indian company) sixteen years previously, but was told by the vizier that these rights had lapsed. Nevertheless, on 21 Ramažān 1129/29 August 1717 five *farmāns* were promulgated, granting Ketelaar "practically all the privileges which the Dutch East India Company wanted, withdrew the obnoxious conditions for trade which [the Persian envoy] Muḥammad Ja'far had put forward in Batavia." Ketelaar "showed his gratitude by making handsome gifts to FathĀlĪ Khan" but, in the face of repeated appeals by the vizier, declared, that he had no authority to provide Persia with naval assistance in the attempt to recover [Bahrain](#) from the sultan of 'Omān, Solṭān b. Sayf II (Lockhart, pp. 401-03). Another attempt by FathĀlĪ Khan to enlist European naval assistance (this time from the Portuguese) in transporting Persian troops to Muscat came to naught in the summer of 1132/1720 (Lockhart, p. 116). Finally, in August of that year Étienne Padery, a Greek interpreter originally attached to the French diplomatic mission, who had returned to Iran in 1131/1719 as French consul in Shiraz, discussed with FathĀlĪ Khan at Qazvīn (without the authorization of his ambassador, the



chevalier Ange de Gardane) the possibility of a joint Franco-Persian action against Muscat. According to Father Tadeusz Krusiński, Fath-‘Alī Khan “loved all Europeans in general, but particularly the French” (p. 171). Padery claimed to have frustrated another demarche by Loṭf-‘Alī Khan designed to obtain help from the Portuguese, but his own attempts came to an end temporarily with the downfall of Fath-‘Alī Khan in December 1720 (Lockhart, pp. 465-66).

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(Roger M. Savory)