



‘EMĀD-AL-DAWLA, MĪRZĀ MOḤAMMAD-ṬĀHER

‘EMĀD-al-DAWLA, Mīrzā MOḤAMMAD-ṬĀHER WAḤĪD QAZVĪNĪ (ca. 1025-1112/1615-1701), poet and court historiographer (*majlesnevīs*, *wāqe‘anevīs*) for nearly three decades (1055-85/1645-74), under Shah ‘Abbās II (r. 1052-77/1642-66) and Shah Solaymān (r. 1077-1105/1666-94) during the first eight years of his reign. Toward the end of Solaymān’s reign (1101/1689-90) he attained the position of grand vizier. Finally, after nine years of service, he was forced to retire from the grand vezierate (1110/1699). Two years later, in his late eighties, he died in Isfahan, during the reign of Shah Solṭān Ḥosayn (r. 1105-34/1694-1722).

Moḥammad-Ṭāher was the son of Mīrzā Ḥosayn Khan Qazvīnī, whose family had served the bureaucracy of the Safavids (Naṣrābādī, p. 17; Ṣafā, p. 1347); all three of Moḥammad-Ṭāher’s brothers served at court as “men of the pen” (Eskandar Beg, p. 283). He was first appointed by Mīrzā Ṣāleḥ, the head of the payroll department of the royal chancellery (*ṣāḥeb-e tawjīh-e dīvān-e a’lā*), as one of twelve scribes (*moḥarrer*) in the accountancy bureau of the royal chancellery (*daftar-kāna-ye homāyūn-e a’lā*) to write an account book on court expenditures (*daftar-e tawjīh*; Naṣrābādī, p. 17; *Taḍkerat al-molūk*, tr. Minorsky, pp. 76, 143). In his twenties (1045-55/1635-45), Moḥammad-Ṭāher was employed by Mīrzā Taqī ‘Etemād-al-Dawla, known as Sārū Taqī (1043-55/1633-45), another grand vizier to Shah Ṣafī, as his personal secretary (Ṣāmlū, fol. 290b; Naṣrābādī, p. 17, states that he was the vizier of Sārū Taqī)



until the latter was assassinated in 1055/1645, three years into the reign of ‘Abbās II. Only five months after the new grand vizier, Soltān-al-‘Olamā’, was reinstated in his second term (1055-64/1645-54), Moḥammad-Ṭāher was promoted at age thirty (1055/1645) to the post of official court historiographer (*majles-nevīs*).

As *majlesnevīs*, Moḥammad-Ṭāher had several duties. He recorded the proceedings of the shah’s audiences. He acted as the shah’s private secretary, transcribing into proper form the oral orders of the shah. Finally, he acted as the shah’s rapporteur for reports and petitions, drawing up the shah’s replies (*Tadkerat al-molūk*, tr. Minorsky, pp. 52-53). These official replies are sprinkled throughout the *‘Abbās-nāma*. A separate collection of his official correspondences (*Monša’āt*), compiled with an introduction by Moḥammad-Ṭāher himself, was published several times in India (Storey, I, p. 315; Storey-Bregel, II, pp. 888-89).

During his tenure as *majlesnevīs* to Shah ‘Abbās II, he wrote a history of that shah’s reign commonly referred to as the *‘Abbās-nāma*. Walīqolī Šamlū, a contemporary amateur historian, ascribes to him another history called *Tārīk-e jadīd*, which began with the rise of the Safavids and ended with the reign of ‘Abbās II. It was, according to the historian Šamlū, a Safavid revisionist history (*be ‘ebārat-e tāza*), for now the *qezelbāš* had waned (Šamlū, fol. 291a). It is not clear what this history was (further on this issue, see Storey-Bregel, II, pp. 889-91). The *‘Abbās-nāma* is rich in material on Uzbek, Mughal, and Georgian dynastic politics, as well as on foreign relations with the Safavids.

He was most probably unemployed between 1085/1674 and 1101/1689, as his contemporary ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Kātūnābādī (p. 53) notes that Moḥammad-Ṭāher was dismissed from his post as *wāqe’anevīs*. During this time he must have been mostly engaged in writing poetry, for in 1083/1672-73 Našrābādī wrote that his *dīvān* consisted of 30,000 verses; by the end of his life it reportedly contained 90,000 verses (*Majma’ al-foṣaḥā’* IV, p. 105). While his near-contemporary literary critic, Našrābādī, wrote nothing of the quality of Waḥīd’s poetry, the *Ātaškada* ascribes his fame as a poet to his political status rather than to his artistic ability (Šafā, p. 1348; Storey-Bregel, II, p. 889). His complete works consist of *ḡazals*, *qaṣīdas*, *robā’īs*, *qeṭ’as*, and a number of *matnawīs*, including *Kalwat-e rāz*, *Nāz o nīāz*, *Āšeq o ma’šūq*, *Golzār-e ‘abbāsī*, etc. (Šafā, p. 1349; Monzawī, *Noskaha* V, index, p. 3879).

Four years before the death of Shah Solaymān, Moḥammad-Ṭāher was



appointed at age seventy-five grand vizier with the title ‘Emād-al-Dawla. He served Shah Solṭān Ḥosayn in this capacity for five more years until he was replaced by Moḥammad-Mo’men Khan in 1110/1699 (Ḳātūnābādī, p. 547; Nāṣerī, fol.77a).

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