



‘EMĀD-AL-KOTTĀB, MOḤAMMAD-ḤOSAYN SAYFĪ QAZVĪNĪ

‘EMĀD-AL-KOTTĀB, MOḤAMMAD-ḤOSAYN SAYFĪ QAZVĪNĪ calligrapher (b. Qazvīn, 27 Farvardīn 1245 Š. /16 April 1866; d. Tehran, 26 Tīr 1315 Š./17 July 1936). Son of Moḥammad, a *qabāla-nevīs* (scrivener), Moḥammad-Ḥosayn was a member of the Ne‘mat-Allāhī Sufi order. He received his early education in Qazvīn. Before settling in Tehran, he spent some time in Iraq and Mašhad, where he lived as a scribe, working mainly in the *nask* style. Upon the recommendation of Amīr Bahādor, he was asked by Moḥaffar-al-Dīn Shah to copy the *Šāh-nāma*, which was completed in 1315/1897-98 (Tehran, 1322/1904). For this he received the title ‘Emād-al-Kottāb (pillar of scribes) and became the official scribe of the Ministry of publications (Wezārat-e enṭebā‘āt). During Aḥmad Shah’s reign, he worked for a while as a scribe in the Ministry of the Interior (Wezārat-e dākela) while at the same time serving as Aḥmad Shah’s penmanship teacher. He was imprisoned in 1335/1917 for being the scribe of the clandestine militant group known as *Komīta-ye mojāzāt*. His subsequent exile was ended by ‘Isā Ṣadīq’s mediation, through Edward G. Browne (q.v.), with Reżā Shah, who also made him court secretary (*ma‘mūr-e taḥrīrāt*) as well as the penmanship teacher of the youthful crown prince Moḥammad-Reżā.

‘Emād-al-Kottāb wrote in all styles, but he is famous for his mastery of *nasta‘liq*, especially of the style of Reżā Kalhor. He is considered the best



nasta‘līq calligrapher after Kalhor. He trained many calligraphers, including ‘Alī-Akbar Kāva, Ḥasan Zarrīn Kaṭṭ, Ebrāhīm Būdarī, and ‘Alī Manzūrī. His main contribution to the art of calligraphy was the publication of *rasm al-kaṭṭĀ* (the rules of penmanship), which made this art widely available for the first time, and his aid in rescuing the art of calligraphy from the decline it experienced during Aḥmad Shah’s reign. Apart from copying various manuscripts (e.g., Naṣīr-al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s *Awṣāf al-ašrāf*, Berlin, 1306 Š./1917; Hātef Eṣfahānī’s *Tarjī‘-band*, Tehran, 1339 Š./1960) and calligraphic pages, he wrote inscriptions for several monuments such as the portal of Sepahsālār *madrasa*, Ferdowsī’s tomb, and the old Faculty of Letters in Tehran. He knew Arabic and Persian and composed poetry in both languages. He also played musical instruments and painted in watercolor and *sīāh qalam* (grisaille). Most of his works were donated to the National Library in Tehran by his daughter Molūk ‘Emād.

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