



ESHĀQ KHAN QARĀ'Ī TORBATĪ

ESHĀQ KHAN QARĀ'Ī TORBATĪ (ca. 1156-1231/1743-1816), one of the wealthiest and most powerful chieftains in Khorasan during the reigns of Āgā Moḥammad Khan and Faṭḥ-'Alī Shah Qājār. The son of a shepherd, he initially served under Najafqolī Khan Tātār, the chief of the Qarā Tātār tribe. He eventually succeeded the chief when his efforts to incite rebellion in the tribe bore fruit and the chief was killed by his own men. Soon afterwards, Eshāq Khan managed to transform Torbat-e Ḥaydariya into a prosperous and safe district, while also making a fortune through farming, leasing camels to merchants, and developing an export/import trade (Malcolm, II, pp. 227-28; Ḥakīm, pp. 760-61; Bāstānī Pārīzī, II, p. 954).

Eshāq Khan's allegiance to Tehran (and also to Herat) remained nominal, and his display of submission to Āgā Moḥammad Khan and Faṭḥ-'Alī Shah at the time of their marches on Mašhad in 1210/1796 and 1217/1802, respectively, was anything but genuine. Faṭḥ-'Alī Shah's appointment in 1218/1803 of his young son, Moḥammad-Walī Mīrzā, as governor of Khorasan was probably perceived by Eshāq Khan as a move designed to exact his allegiance and thus did not please the ambitious chief (Fasā'ī, ed. Rāstgār, p. 663, tr. Busse, pp. 69, 104; E'temād-al-Salṭana, *Montaẓam-e nāšeri*, p. 1464; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* I, pp. 107-8, IV, pp. 26-33). Ultimately, Eshāq Khan's increasingly independent behavior and control of his region, combined with a few attempts at revolt against the royal governor, led to his death: in 1231/1816 he and his son, Ḥasan-'Alī Khan, were strangled by the order and in the presence of Moḥammad-Walī Mīrzā. The executions, however, only exacerbated the



situation, forcing Faṭḥ-'Alī Shah (who also feared an Afghan attack) to remove his son from the post of governor of Khorasan and replace him with his other brother Ḥasan-'Alī Mīrzā Šojā'-al- Saṭṭana, until then governor of Tehran (Fraser, p. 26; E'temād-al-Saṭṭana, *Montaẓam-e naṣerī*, pp. 1529-30). The latter's marriage in 1235/1819 to Eshāq Khan's daughter was in fact part of an agreement between the governor and Moḥammad Khan, the disgruntled and tyrannical son of Eshāq Khan who by then had gained control of the same area, to compromise and recognize each other's respective strength. The marriage also produced a line of descendants from which the most notable is the Qahramān family of Mašhad (Sepehr, I, p. 188; Bāstānī Pārīzī, II, p. 950).

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