



FĀẒEL KHAN GARRŪSĪ, MOḤAMMAD

FĀẒEL KHAN GARRŪSĪ, MOḤAMMAD (b. 14 Du'l-ḥejja 1198/29 October 1784; d. 1259/1843), poet, litterateur, and secretary during the reigns of Fath-'Alī Shah (1212-50/1797-1834) and Moḥammad Shah Qājār (1250-64/1834-48). His family belonged to the Turkmen Bāyandor tribe and resided at Bījār, the administrative center of Garrūs. Fāẓel Khan was the title bestowed upon him by Fath-'Alī Shah (Āryanpūr, I, pp. 54-55; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* III, p. 50).

After his father's death in 1214/1799-80, he left Garrūs to pursue his studies, eventually going to Tehran to seek justice for the wrongs done by the governor of Garrūs. In Tehran his literary talent, beautiful calligraphy, and particularly his retentive memory attracted the attention of Fath-'Alī Khan Ṣabā, the court's poet laureate (*malek-al-šo'ara*), who presented him to the court. There he was employed as a royal page and was assigned to Ṣabā to supervise his education. He was eventually appointed the official reciter (*rāwī*) of panegyrics (hence his pen name *rāwī*) as well as in charge of the army review (*amīr-e 'arż-e sepāh*; Maḥmūd Mīrzā Qājār, p. 464; Reżwānī, 1976, p. 214).

In 1235/1819-20 he was made the chief herald (*jārčī-bāšī*) at court. In the same year he was sent to Hamadān to collect two thousand toman in fines from two leading Ne'mat-Allāhī Sufis, Moḥammad-Ja'far Qarāgūzlū and Āqā Sayyed Ḥasan Hamadānī (instead of relying on prince Moḥammad-Reżā Mīrzā, the governor of Gilān, who was suspected of having Sufi tendencies; Hedāyat,



Rawzat al-ṣafā IX, p. 582; E'temād-al-Salṭana, pp. 1545-46; Sepehr, p. 188).

In summer 1829 Fāzel Khan was sent in the entourage of Prince Ḳosrow Qājār's mission to Russia for the purpose of offering official apologies for the murder of Alexander S. Griboïedov (q.v.), Russian minister at Tehran. During this trip he met Alexander Pushkin, who accompanied the Russian army under General Paskovich in the Caucasus on its way to war with the Ottomans. Pushkin, who had requested to meet the Persian poet, recorded in his travelogue the account of this encounter with Fāzel Khan and composed a poem in the memory of their meeting (Nafīsī, pp. 494-95; Āryanpūr, I, p. 55). The claim that Pushkin had met with the poet Mollā Fath-Allāh known as Fāzel Khan, who had been director of two schools in Tbilisi (Āryanpūr, I, pp. 54-55), cannot be corroborated by Pushkin's notes. That it was Garrūsī whom Pushkin met is corroborated by Ḳosrow Mīrzā's travelogue, who records Ḍu'l-ḥejja 1244/1829 as the date of passage through Qāzī Beg, which corresponds to the date and place of the meeting (Afšār, p. 165).

Garrūsī was a poet, but his style in prose and correspondence was distinguished in his time and had as many admirers as the famous *Monša'āt* of Qā'em-Maqām Farahānī, who considered him a fine stylist (Qā'em-Maqām, letters nos. 5 and 131). One of the excellent examples of his writings is the letter he wrote to Āqā Khan Maḥallātī (q.v.), soliciting his help to pay a debt (Bahār, III, pp. 333-39; *Yağmā* 6, 1332 Š./1953, pp. 295-97).

Garrūsī's extant works include the collection of his letters (preserved at the Tabrīz Public Library; Reżwānī, 1976, p. 216) and *Taḍkara-ye anjoman-e Ḳāqān* (comp. 1234/1818-19), comprising an introduction, four chapters (*anjoman*) on the biographies of Fath-'Alī Shah, Qajar princes, and panegyrists at the court of Fath-'Alī Shah, with samples of their poetry. It also has an epilogue on the author's own biography. A very fine manuscript copied in 1236/1820-21 belongs to the library of Madrasa-ye 'ālī-e Sepahsālār in Tehran (Golčīn-e Ma'ānī, pp. 60-67). A poet himself, Fāzel Khan adulated Fath-'Alī Shah by not only praising the panegyrists at his court, but also preferring Ṣabā's *Šāhanšāh-nāma* to Ferdowsī's *Šāh-nāma*, a poor exaggeration of its merits that earned sarcastic remarks from 'Alīqolī Mīrzā E'tezād-al-Salṭana (p. 253).



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