



ḤASAN BEG RUMLU

ḤASAN BEG RUMLU (b. Qom, 937/1530-31), author of *Aḥsan al-tawāriḡ* (q.v.) and a cavalryman (*qurčī*) of the Rumlu Turkman tribe of *qezelbāš* during the reign of Shah Ṭahmāsb Ṣafawī. Eskandar Beg Torkamān (I, p. 54, tr. Savory, I, p. 89) called him Ḥasan-Solṭān Rumlu and mentioned him as one of the doyen amirs of *qezelbāš*.

Ḥasan Beg was the grandson of Amir Solṭān Rumlu, the governor of Qazvin and Sāvoj Bolāḡ, and a well-known *qezelbāš* leader during the reign of Shah Esmāʿil. After his grandfather's death in 946/1539-30, Ḥasan Beg was unable to take over the command of his grandfather's army because, according to his own account, he was busy with his unpleasant duties as a *qurčī* (*meḥnat-e qurčigar*, Ḥasan Rumlu, ed. Navāʿi, II, p. 382).

Most of what is known about Ḥasan Beg is found in his *Aḥsān al-tawāriḡ* (q.v.), an important Safavid chronicle originally intended as a twelve-volume general history, of which only the last two volumes have survived. Although he was a military officer, he received the sort of training that was typical of a Persian administrator and bureaucrat. For example, both Ḥasan Beg and Qāzi Aḥmad Qomi note that Ḥasan Beg studied the art of calligraphy under the renowned calligrapher Mawlānā Malek Qazvini, with whom he had also studied the commentary (*ḥāšīa*) of the *Šamsiya*, a work on logic by Najm-al-Din ʿAli Qazvini (Ḥasan Rumlu, ed. Navāʿi, II, p. 186; tr. Seddon, pp. 67, 229; Qomi, tr. Minorsky, p. 141). He also studied with Mawlānā Abu'l-Ḥasan, a son of Maw-lānā Aḥmad Bāvardi. Ḥasan Beg described this teacher of his as “the most learned of the learned of the age,” with whom he read the commentary



of ‘Alā’-al-Din ‘Ali Qušji on the *Tajrid al-kalām* of Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi (Rumlu, ed. Navā’i, II, pp. 525-26, tr. Seddon, pp. 179, 228).

In 948/1541-42, Ḥasan Beg accompanied Shah Ṭah-māsb on an expedition to Dezful, and from then on he “was with the royal camp in all its journeys, and saw most events with his own eyes” (ed. Navā’i, II, p. 389, tr. Seddon, p. 136), thus becoming an eyewitness to most of the subsequent military events that he described. In 953/1546-47, approximately five years after the Dezful expedition, Ḥasan Beg fought in the Georgian campaign. He mentions the battle of his own contingent of qurčis with “a group of infidels” (*fawj-i azgabrān*, i.e., Christians), and how he, accompanied by Šāhqoli, a Čapani qurči, wounded, killed, and captured a group of them (ed. Navā’i, II, p. 409, tr. Seddon, p. 143). The final military episode in which he explicitly relates his involvement was the 957/1550 battle against the Ardalān Kurds. In this case, Ḥasan Beg describes how he and his friend Ḥosaynqoli Kālifa attacked a group of Kurds near the fortress of Zalam (ed. Navā’i, II, p. 446, tr. Seddon, pp. 156-57).

Although Ḥasan Beg does not mention his involvement in succession matters after the death of Shah Ṭahmāsb, ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Navā’i, in the introduction to his edition of *Aḥsan al-tawāriḳ* (pp. 18-19), on the basis of the fact that Rumlu praised Shah Esmā’il II, to whom he dedicated his book, and referred to Ḥaydar Mirzā’s ambition as demonic persuasions and wishful aspirations (*taswilāt-e šayṭāni wa taḳayyolāt-e nafsāni*), suggests that Ḥasan Beg sided with the other Rumlu partisans who wanted to install Esmā’il Mirzā as the next king and opposed the Ostajlu qezelbāš and others who were supporting Ḥaydar Mirzā (ed. Navā’i, pp. 601, 603, 623). Navā’i further suggests that Ḥasan Beg might have been among the Rumlu qurčis who participated in the murder of Ḥaydar Mirzā. After the death of Shah Esmā’il II, Ḥasan Beg met Moḥammad Kōdābanda, the next king, in Qom, where he was received at the court as a member of the royal retinue (ed. Navā’i, II, p. 652).

Ḥasan Beg’s most enduring legacy is historiographical. Subsequent generations of Safavid historians, such as Eskandar Beg Torkamān (q.v.), the author of *Tāriḳ-e ‘ālamārā-ye ‘Abbāsi*, mentioned Ḥasan Beg primarily in connection with his *Aḥsān al-tawāriḳ*, and reproduced significant portions of this history in their sections devoted to the period of Shah Ṭahmāsb. Later chroniclers who did not mention Ḥasan Beg by name still quoted from his work, thereby preserving his words in their own texts. Ḥasan Beg’s history also survives in Fazli Esfah-āni’s *Afzāl al-tawāriḳ* and a very late cluster of



mostly anonymous semi-fictional accounts of early Safavid history such as the *‘Ālamārā-ye Šāh Esmā’il* (Morton, 1990, 1996).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. H. Morton, “The Early Years of Shah Isma‘il in the *Afzal al-tavarikh* and Elsewhere,” in Charles Melville, ed., *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, London, 1996, pp. 27-51.

Idem, “The Date and Attribution of the *Ross Anonymous*: Notes on a Persian History of Shāh Ismā‘il I,” in Charles Melville, ed., *Pembroke Papers I: Persian and Islamic Studies in Honour of P. W. Avery*, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 179-212.

Qāzi Aḥmad Monši Qomi, *Golestān-e honar*, ed. Aḥmad Sohayli K̄vānsāri, Tehran, n.d.; tr. Vladimir Minorsky as *Calligraphers and Painters*, Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers 3/2, Washington, D.C., 1959.

Ḥasan Beg Rumlu, *Aḥsān al-tawārikò*, ed. ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Navā‘i, 2 vols., Tehran, 1349-57 Š./1970-78; ed. and tr. C. N. Seddon as *A Chronicle of the Early Safawis*, Baroda, India, 1931-34.

C. N. Seddon, “Hasan-i Rumlu’s *Ahsanu’t-tawarikh*,” *JRAS*, 1927, pp. 307-13.

Şafā, *Adabiyāt* V/3, pp. 1669-75.

Roger Savory, “Ḥasan-i Rumlu,” in *EI2* III, p. 253.