



HEDĀYAT, REŽĀQOLI KHAN

HEDĀYAT, REŽĀQOLI KHAN, Persian literary historian, administrator, and poet of the Qajar period (b. Tehran, 15 Moḥarram 1215/8 June 1800; d. Tehran, 10 Rabi' II 1288/29 June 1871). He came from a prominent family which traced its lineage back to Kemāl-e Ƙojandi, the well-known lyric poet of the 8th/14th century. His father, Moḥammad-Hādi Khan, served in the retinue of Qajar tribal leaders in Māzandarān, hence his son's full appellation as Hedāyat Māzan-darāni, Ṭabari, or Ṭabarestāni in his autobiographical notices (Storey, I/2, p. 906) and in other anthologies. At the court of Āqā Moḥammad Shah, Režāqoli's father became head of the household staff and finances, and following Faṭḥ-'Ali Khan's accession, was posted to Khorasan and later to Shiraz as a provincial administrator. He died in 1218/1803 while serving as treasurer under Prince Ḥosayn-'Ali Mirzā Farmānfarmā (q.v.). After his father's death, the young Režāqoli moved with his mother first to Tehran and later to her family home in Bārforuš (now Bābol). Returning to Shiraz, his mother embarked on the pilgrimage to Mecca, where she died. The boy was raised and educated by his stepfather Moḥammad-Mahdi Khan, who wrote poetry under the pen name "Šaḥna." Hedayat began his long career in administration in the province of Fārs, under Ḥosayn-'Ali Mirzā. His first poems appeared under the pen name "Čākar," which he soon changed to "Hedāyat." During his visit to Shiraz in 1245/1829, Faṭḥ-'Ali Shah bestowed on him the title *amir-al-šo'arā'* and was willing to name him *malek-al-šo'arā'* to replace his recently deceased poet laureate, Šabā (d. 1238/1822-23). However, Hedayat fell ill and was unable to travel to Tehran to take up the post. After the death of Faṭḥ-'Ali Shah in 1250/1834, he continued to work in the



provincial administration under a quick succession of governors (see [FĀRS iv.](#)).

Hedayat was summoned to Tehran by Moḥammad Shah in 1254/1838 and took up residence with the grand vizier, Ḥāji Mirzā Āqāsi (q.v.), a sign of his already high status in the upper echelon of the Qajar court. He became one of the Shah's close attendants and was entrusted with the education of his favorite son, 'Abbās Mirzā (later entitled Molkārā), thus earning the title of "Lala-bāši." About this time, he broadened the scope of his literary activities and began to write the first of his prose works on religious lore and literary history, the *Riāz al-ārefīn*. In the political upheaval following the death of Moḥammad Shah in 1264/1848, Hedayat retired temporarily from public life when his patron and former pupil 'Abbās Mirzā was exiled. In 1268/1851, he was persuaded to enter the service of Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah by the Amir-(e) Kabir Mirzā Taqī Khan (q.v.) and was appointed to lead a diplomatic mission to the court of Moḥammad-Amin Khan in Khiva (Eqbāl, pp. 9-14). On his return to Tehran, Hedayat became the deputy director (*nāẓem*) of the newly established Dār al-Fonun (q.v.) and was instrumental in designing its curriculum (Hedayat, p. 84). During this time, he also began composing the two massive prose works for which he is perhaps best known, *Rawżat al-ṣafā-ye nāṣeri* and *Majma' al-foṣaḥā*. Hedayat spent most of the latter years of his life in Tabriz, where he once again acted as royal tutor, this time to the heir designate Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Mirzā. He continued to be a productive writer and editor, preparing a number of works designed for educational use. He finally returned to Tehran, where he lived in seclusion until his death.

Most of his vast literary output remains unpublished, especially his poetry. Hedayat compiled two *divāns*. The first, devoted to *qaṣidas*, contains panegyrics composed for court occasions during over half a century of service to the Qajars; examples of these abound in the autobiographical entry in *Majma' al-foṣaḥā* (VI, pp. 1211-1332). The second, less substantial *divān*, consisting of his *ḡazals*, *tarji'-bands*, *robā'iyāts*, and other verse forms, is scarcely represented in *Majma' al-foṣaḥā* (see Rieu, suppl., pp. 227-28).

Hedayat was also prolific in the *maṭnawī* genre, and six such works of his were collected together under the title *Setta-ye ẓaruriya* "The essential six": *Anwār al-welāya* describes the lives and adventures of the twelve Shi'ite Imams; *Golestān-e Eram* or *Bektāš-nāma* tells the story of the poetess Rābe'a bt. Ka'b of Balk and her love for Bektāš, a servant in the court of her brother King Hāret; *Baḥr al-ḥaqāyeq* contains didactic reflections interspersed with admonitory



anecdotes; *Anis al-‘āšeqin* consists of stories about Sufi saints; *Korram behešt* recounts the battles of ‘Ali b. Abi Ṭāleb; and *Hedāyat-nāma* is modeled on Mawlānā’s *Maṭnawī-ye ma‘nawī* (Divān Beygi, III, pp. 2071-72; *Majma‘ al-foṣaḥā‘*, pp. *kāf-gāf*). Not included in the *Setta-ye żaruriya* are a seventh *maṭnawī*, *Menhaj al-hedāya*, and a short *Sāqi-nāma* (Golčīn-e Ma‘āni, 1368 Š./1987, pp. 577-82).

Hedayat was even more productive as a literary scholar. Drawing heavily on earlier examples of the genre, two of his works in this field represent a final summation of the classical tradition of literary biographical dictionaries. *Riāż al-‘ārefīn* contains the biographies of 354 Sufi poets and was dedicated to Moḥammad Shah. Completed near the end of Hedayat’s life in 1288/1871, *Majma‘ al-foṣaḥā‘* is a massive compendium of the biographies of 867 poets. The classical traditions of rhetoric and lexicography are also represented by two works: *Madārej al-balāga* is a short treatise on rhetorical terms and poetic devices, while *Farhang-e anjomanārā-ye nāṣeri* was perhaps the final product of Hedayat’s long career and was published by his son shortly after his death. To these works should be added Hedayat’s activity as a commentator and editor. *Meftāḥ al-konuz* is an unpublished commentary on problematic verses from the works of Kāqāni. Hedayat also edited early publications of the *divāns* of Manučeḥri (see Storey, I, p. 912) and Nāṣer-e Kōsrow, as well as the *Qābus-nāma* and a popular anthology of selections from Mawlānā’s *Divān-e Šams Tabrizi*, entitled *Šams al-ḥaqāyeq*.

Hedayat also wrote widely on Sufism and Shi‘ite religious lore. Golčīn-e Ma‘āni (1368 Š./1987, p. 576) describes the unpublished Sufi treatise *Oṣul al-foṣul fi ḥoṣul al-woṣul* as “the most important” of Hedayat’s works. Other such works include *Laṭāyef al-ma‘āref*, *Jāme‘ al-asrār*, and *Majma‘ al-asrār fi eṣṭelāḥāt ‘orafā‘*. Hedayat also wrote a devotional history of the Shi‘ite Imams entitled *Mazāher al-anwār fi manāqeb a‘emma al-aṭhār*.

As an historian, Hedayat’s most famous work was his edition and supplement to Mirḳvānd’s *Rawżat al-ṣafā*, entitled *Rawżat al-ṣafā-ye nāṣeri*. Commissioned by Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, the final three supplementary volumes (described by Bahār, III, p. 368) are an important and often first-hand account of Qajar history. The chronologies contained in *Ajmal al-tawāriḳ* and *Fehrest al-tawāriḳ* seem designed to serve primarily as textbooks. *Neżād-nāma-ye pādšāhān-e Irān-neżād* is described in Storey (I, p. 239) as “a history of those dynasties in Persia and elsewhere who traced their origin to the ancient kings of Persia, written in 1274/1857-58 at the request of Māneḥji Linji Hušang



Hātaryā.” *Sefārat-nāma-ye K̄vārazm* is a first-person account of the author’s ambassadorial mission to Khiva in 1268/1851. Finally, Golčīn-e Ma’āni mentions a work not cited elsewhere: *Dalīl al-ṭālebin fī dekr al-‘ārefīn dar aḥwāl-e Ḥājj Zayn-al-‘Ābedīn Šīrvāni wa Kawṭar-‘Alīšāh*, which appears to be a biography of two contemporary leaders of the Ne‘mat-Allāhi Sufi order.

Hedayat’s character and demeanor have been consistently praised. The French diplomat and social theorist Gobineau, for example, relished “les façons légères et vivantes” of Hedayat, and described him as “un des hommes les plus spirituels et les plus aimables que j’aie rencontrés dans aucune partie du monde” (pp. 454-55). He was also widely admired for his work at the Dār al-fonun (q.v.) and its publishing house (Āryanpur, I, pp. 263-64; Rypka, pp. 339-41). His reputation as a poet and scholar, however, has not fared as well. While Bahār (III, p. 348) lists Hedayat among the poets who “refined” the poetic style of Ṣabā to bring it closer to that of classical masters such as ‘Onṣori, Manučehri, and Kāqāni, Browne (IV, pp. 224-25), Rypka (p. 340), and Āryanpur (I, pp. 263) consider his poetry imitative and undistinguished, placing him among the second-rank Qajar poets. Any final evaluation must await a full and detailed study of his poetic works. Hedayat’s writings as both a political and literary historian have also come under sharp criticism from Browne (IV, p. 7) and Golčīn-e Ma’āni (1348-50 Š./1969-71, I, pp. 667-70 and II, pp. 147-48), especially for his often cavalier attitude toward his Safavid sources. In all this, he was representative of the *bāzgašt-e adabi* (q.v.), “literary return movement,” which imitated the style of earlier periods in order to purify Persian poetry of the perceived decadence and foreign influences which emerged in the Timurid and Safavid periods. Hedayat’s blanket condemnation of the so-called “Indian style” (see Yarshater, p. 224) remained largely unquestioned until recent years (Losensky, pp. 2-3). He remains a crucial source for the literary and political history of the Qajar period. His prose style is generally simple and elegant, and his efforts as a writer and publisher remain an essential link between modern scholarship and the classical tradition of poetry and historiography. Hedayat’s literary and administrative legacy was carried on by his many illustrious descendants, culminating in the monumental achievements of his great-great-grandson Šādeq Hedāyat (q.v.; Kamshad, pp. 138-39).



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The most important contemporary sources on Hedayat's life and works are undoubtedly the autobiographical entry in *Majma' al-foṣaḥā* (1957-61, VI, pp. 1209-11) and the introduction to *Farhang-e anjomanārā-ye nāšeri*. Other *taḍkera* sources are listed in Sayyed Aḥmad Divānbeygi Širāzi, *Ḥadiqat al-šo'arā'*, ed. 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Navā'i, Tehran, 1364-66 Š./1985-87, III, pp. 2071-72. Among modern scholarly works, special mention should be made of Storey, I/2, pp. 151-52, 224, 239, 342-43, 906-13; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, pp. 39-42; and Mazāher Moṣaffā's introduction to *Majma' al-foṣaḥā* (1336-40 Š./1957-61) I, pp. ḡayn-gāf.

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