



ḤOSAYNQOLI KHAN SARDĀR-E IRAVĀNI

ḤOSAYNQOLI KHAN SARDĀR-E IRAVĀNI, important governor in the early Qajar period (b. ca. 1155/1742, d. 1246/1831). He was the son of Mo-ḥammad Khan Qājār, a member of the Qovānlu clan of the Qajars, who in the eighteenth century had governed Irevān (Erevan, q.v.). His birthplace is unknown. His occasional use of the title of Qazvini could indicate Qazvin as a possible birthplace, but more probably the association relates to his successful campaign against Šādeq Khan Šaqāqi near Qazvin and his subsequent governorship there. Ḥosaynqoli is first mentioned as being in Shiraz as a member of the household of the heir-apparent, Bābā Khan (later Fath-‘Ali Shah), where he served as the head page (*qollar-āqāsi*; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* I, p. 402). After his accession to the throne, Fath-‘Ali Shah rewarded Ḥosaynqoli for his loyalty in a number of ways: by granting him several posts, including the governorship of Khorasan (Sepehr, I, pp. 119-24), by marrying a sister of Ḥosaynqoli, by asking for the hand of one of Ḥosaynqoli’s daughters for ‘Abbas Mirzā (q.v.), the heir to the throne (Ormanian, III, p. 3481) and, by agreeing to the marriage of his 29th daughter to Moḥammadqoli, the son of Ḥosaynqoli (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* I, p. 497). Requiring a strong and loyal governor to command the fortress of Erevan against the Russian advances during the first Russo-Persian War (1804-13), the shah appointed Ḥosaynqoli as the commander-in-chief (*sardār*) of the Persian forces north of the Araxes (Aras) River (Freygang, p. 284). A year later, Ḥosaynqoli’s brother, Ḥasan Khan, whose reputation for bravery had earned him the sobriquet *sāru aslān* (“yellow lion”), arrived in



Erevan, but he continued to harass the Russian forces on the borders of Georgia (Ḥedāyat, *Rawżat al-ṣafā* IX, pp. 388-90). During his twenty-year tenure Ḥosaynqoli tried to win the goodwill of the population, especially of the Armenians. The rightful head of the Armenian Church, Catholicos Daniel, whose seat was usurped by Catholicos David, was reinstated at the Holy See of Ejmiatsin (Uch-Kilisa) outside of Erevan (Bournoutian, 1992, p. 78). He kept good relations with Melik Sahak Aqamal, the secular chief of the Armenians of the khanate of Erevan, and was instrumental in arranging the marriage of Sahak's daughter to the renegade Georgian prince, Alexander Batonishvili, a staunch enemy of the Russians.

Foreign travelers call him one of the most powerful and wealthy chiefs in Persia with as much authority as 'Abbās Mirzā (Morier, p. 313; Fraser, I, p. 227; Ker Porter, I, p. 202; Kotzebue, p. 105). Ḥosaynqoli Khan did not have any members of his family as hostages in Tehran, had the right to mint coins, and had the rare opportunity of keeping a large part of the revenue for defense purposes. He encouraged trade and created a stable administration. Even Armenian and Russian sources, who have little good to say about the Persian khans in Transcaucasia, praise Ḥosaynqoli for being kind, honest, noble, conscientious, and just (Abovian, III, p. 58; Haxthausen, pp. 265-66).

In the long run, the ill-organized Persian army was no match for the full force of the experienced Russian army, veterans of the Napoleonic wars. The Second Russo-Persian War (1826-28) resulted in the Treaty of Turkamančāy and the annexation of the khanates of Erevan and Naḳčivān (Chokur-e Sa'd) to Russia. Although Ḥasan was captured, held for four months in Tiflis, and released under article XIII of the Treaty of Turkamančāy (Sepehr, I, p. 379), Ḥosaynqoli, who had avoided capture was, according to Persian sources, honored by the shah and died a prosperous man at the age of ninety (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* I, p. 404). Armenian and Western sources, however, claim that he died in a stable, a poor and broken man (Alboyajian, p. 379; Lynch, I, p. 217). Unlike other Transcaucasian khans, Ḥosaynqoli did not make a deal with the Russians and managed to thwart their efforts for two decades. Russia's anger was demonstrated in article XII of the Treaty and Turkamančāy (1828), which specifically deprived him and his brother of the right to sell or exchange their property in Erevan—a right granted to all others (Hurewitz, I, 99).



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