



JANĀB DAMĀVANDI

JANĀB (JENĀB) DAMĀVANDI (b. village of Aḥmadābād, Damāvand district, 1867; d. Aḥmadābād, 1973), popular name of Moḥammad Fallāḥi, a vocalist of the late Qajar period, who performed in religious assemblies. His father Mollā ‘Ali, known as Mirzā-ye Mo‘allem, was the personal tutor of Solṭān Morād Mirzā Ḥosām-al-Salṭana, a son of the crown prince ‘Abbās Mirzā.

Mollā ‘Ali enrolled Moḥammad at the Ṣadr School in Tehran where, alongside his school work, he received training as a vocalist by Āqā Ja‘far Lāhiji. There is not much information available about the first thirty years of his life, but what is known is that he gained the title *janāb* (see ALQĀB O ‘ANĀWIN) during this period. He lived in era when the traditions and modes (*dastgāh*, q.v.) of Persian music were being transformed by the masters. Damāvandi associated with the Farāhāni brothers, Āqā Ḥosaynqoli and Mirzā ‘Abd-Allāh (qq.v.) and other masters of the time, including Hājj ‘Ali-Akbar Khan Ṣahnāzi, Ġolām-Ḥosayn Darviš Khan, Bāqer Khan, Ṭāherzāda, Eqbāl Āḍar, from each of whom he learned something different (“Yādvāra,” p. 67).

Damāvandi’s voice is preserved on records dating back to when records of Persian music were first being produced in Tehran, Tbilisi, London, and Paris (1906-15). In these early recordings Damāvandi has sung in the modes of *šur* (accompanied by Mirzā Asad-Allāh Khan on the *tār*), *mokālef* (accompanied by Ḥosayn Khan on the *ka-mānčā*), *šur-e dašti*, and *bayāt-e Ešfahān* (accompanied by Āqā Ḥosaynqoli on the *tār*; Sepantā, p. 171). He also made a recording of the call to prayer (*adān*) and prayers (*monājāt*; catalogue number G.14.12596-95), which brought him his initial fame. He also made a number of



recordings with ‘Ali Akbar Šahnāzi on the *tār*, the first of which was when Šahnāzi was only fourteen years old (Sepantā, p. 143, n. 3).

Ḥasan Mašḥun has characterized Damāvandi’s style of singing as the Ḳorāsāni style and has compared him to such masters as Sayyed Bāqer Jandaqi, Shaikh Ṭāher Žia’ Retā’i, Ḥāji Tāj Neišāburi, and ‘Ali Khan Nāyeb-al-Saltāna (Mašḥun, p. 658). However, in a radio interview on 14 Dey 1350 Š./4 January 1971, Damāvandi explained that he learned to sing the call to prayer from Sayyed Ja’far Lāhiji in Tehran and singing the repertoire of Persian music (*radif*) from Sayyed Abd-al-Raḥim Ešfahāni in Isfahan (Mašḥun, p. 417). Despite the difficulty in precisely determining Damāvandi’s style of singing from extant records, it can be said that it resembles the Ḳorāsāni style more closely than the Ešfahāni style.

Damāvandi was buried in his birthplace of Aḥma-dābād. He is remembered by his fellow villagers as a generous individual. He built a school in Aḥmadābād, which is still standing and is known as Ḳāna-ye Mo’allem (House of the Teacher). His works have not been reprinted. The Kowṭar House of Culture (Farhang-sarā-ye Kowṭar) in Damāvand commemorated the 30th anniversary of his death with a memorial on 4 Dey 1382 Š./ 24 December 2003 (“Yādvāra,” pp. 66-67).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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