



## ḲOSROW MIRZĀ QĀJĀR

**ḲOSROW MIRZĀ QĀJĀR** (b. 1813; d. [Hamadan](#), 21 Ramazan, 1291/21 October 1875), the seventh son of Crown Prince ‘[Abbās Mirzā](#), who led an official Iranian delegation to the Tsarist court in St. Petersburg.

Following the murder of [Alexander Griboedov](#), the envoy and minister plenipotentiary of Russia in Tehran (*wazir-e moḳtār*) in 1829, and the massacre of the entire Russian legation, save one, by an angry mob, the government of Iran, fearing that Griboedov’s death might provoke the Russians to start a new war, dispatched a mission with valuable gifts and an official letter of apology from [Fath-‘Ali Shah](#) to Tsar Nicholas I (Hedāyat, IX, pp. 705-10; Algar, pp. 95-99; E‘teżād-al-Salṭana, pp. 160-61, 383-84). The mission was headed by Ḳosrow Mirzā, who was present at the peace negotiations in Dehḳārḳān, which led to the signing of the Treaty of Turkmanchay. There he had met General Ivan Paskevich, the Russian commander of the Caucasus, and had made a very good impression on him.

In Šawwāl 1244/April 1829, Ḳosrow Mirzā left for the mission, accompanied by a large entourage, which included Mirzā Moḳammad Khan Zangana (*amir-e nezām*), Mirzā Mas‘ud Garmrudi (‘[Abbās Mirzā](#)’s chief secretary [*monšī*]), Mirzā Šāleḩ Širāzi (Iranian envoy to Tbilisi), ḩosayn-‘Ali Beg (Ḳosrow Mirzā’s tutor), Mirzā Taḩi Khan Farāhāni (the future [Amir-e Kabir](#)), Mirzā Bābā Afšār (physician), [Fāzel Khan Garrusi](#) (poet), Moḳammad-ḩosayn Khan (the chief chamberlain of ‘[Abbās Mirzā](#)’), Magniago de Borea (Ḳosrow Mirzā’s French tutor), and [Batholomeo Semino](#) (a military advisor to ‘[Abbās Mirzā](#)’) (Hedāyat, IX, pp. 705-13, 715-16; Bāmdād, I, pp. 483-84).



The delegation left [Tabriz](#) on 21 April 1829 (16 Šawwāl 1244) and crossed the [Aras](#) river on May 9. They met Paskevich in Tbilisi on May 19 and, after waiting for instructions from home, Ḳosrow Mirzā and his entourage left Tbilisi on June 4. They arrived in Moscow on July 26, after an arduous journey by carriage through difficult roads and mountain passes. On the way the prince visited the mineral springs of Piatigorsk, the cities of Vladikavaz, Stavropol, Novo-Cherkassk, Voronezh, and Tula (Bournoutian,, pp. 46-90).

While in Moscow, Ḳosrow Mirzā unexpectedly visited Griboedov's mother and shed tears with her. This act endeared him to the Moscovites. The Iranians arrived in St. Petersburg on August 11 and were housed in the magnificent Tauride Palace. The official apology ceremony in which the prince read Fath-'Ali Shah's letter to Tsar Nicholas I took place in the Winter Palace on August 22 (Bournoutian, pp. 160-62) and has been recreated in the 2002 Russian film *Russian Ark*, directed by Alexander Sokurov.

The Iranians stayed seventy-nine days in the Russian capital, during which time Ḳosrow Mirzā not only charmed the tsar, the royal family, and the nobility, but also managed to reduce Iran's war indemnity payment to Russia. He was feted like royalty and took part in maneuvers, balls, and state dinners, and visited the opera, ballet, and all the important sites of the Russian capital (Hedāyat, IX, p. 716).

In exchange for the official gifts from the shah, which included a large diamond that [Nāder Shah](#) Afšār had brought from India as war booty (see Kelly, p. 201), carpets, rare manuscripts, and a pearl necklace; in return Russia gave fabulous gifts of crystal, porcelain, furs, and other items to the prince and senior members of his delegation. Having accomplished his mission, Ḳosrow Mirzā left St. Petersburg on 27 February 1830/4 Ramadan 1245 and arrived in Tabriz on 20 Ramadan 1245/15 March 1830.

Fortunately, both Iranians and Russians kept a detailed account of the trip. Mirzā Moṣṭafā Afšār, the secretary of Mirzā Mas'ud, accompanied the group and kept a journal (*safar-nama*) of the trip. Two Russian officials, General Rennenkampf and Count Sukhtelen, who served as hosts/escorts (*mehmāndārs*) to the Iranian delegation, also kept detailed records of the events which had transpired during the ten-month visit, and these help to fill in the many gaps of the Iranian account. The complete narrative, using all the Persian and Russian sources was published by the present author, as *From Tabriz to St. Petersburg*.



Ḳosrow Mirzā was received extremely well by both his father and grandfather. He had succeeded in making Russia a firm ally of Iran and had managed to reduce the influence of the British in Tehran. His success seems to have transformed him, and he began to display a haughty demeanor towards Moḥammad Mirzā, the eldest son of ‘Abbās Mirzā. In 1831, Ḳosrow Mirzā was, for a short time, appointed the governor of [Kerman](#).

The death of ‘Abbās Mirzā in 1249/1833 opened the door to a number of pretenders, including Ḳosrow Mirzā and his full brother Jahāngir Mirzā, who challenged the legitimacy of Moḥammad Mirzā. Taking advantage of the shah’s illness, Moḥammad Mirzā ordered the arrest of his two half brothers. The death of Faṭḥ-‘Ali Shah in 1834 caused major unrest in Iran. Various pretenders, including several of the shah’s fifty sons, hoped to ascend the throne. The new Russian envoy, Count Ivan Simonich, together with the British envoy, made sure that article VII of the Torkmanchay Treaty, in which ‘Abbās Mirzā is officially recognized as “the Successor and Heir Presumptive of the Crown of Persia,” was observed (Hurewitz, I, p. 233). Thus, Moḥammad Mirzā, the eldest son of ‘Abbās Mirzā, ascended the throne as Moḥammad Shah (Bournoutian,, pp. 22-23).

Although Ḳosrow Mirzā hoped that the tsar would rescue him from prison, the new shah, soon after his coronation, ordered that both his half brothers be blinded. Later, Ḳosrow Mirzā was relocated to the vicinity of Hamadan, where he spent the rest of his life surrounded by members of his family. He died on 21 Ramazan 1291/21 October 1875 at the age of 62.

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