



Mázandarán

AND

Astarábád

H. L. RABINO

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY

Charles Melville

MÁZANDARÁN
AND
ASTARÁBÁD

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By
H. L. RABINO

DI BORGOMALE

WITH A NEW PREFACE BY

Charles Melville

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PREFACE

Hyacinth Louis Rabino di Borgomale (1877–1950) was a professional diplomat who spent many years in Persia in a variety of consular posts, first in Kirmanshah and particularly at Rasht, where he served as vice consul from 1906 to 1912. He was then posted to the Arab world (first Morocco and ultimately to Cairo, via Smyrna and Salonika), but retained his interest in the Caspian provinces, as is evident not only from his continuing publications in both English and French, but also, of course, from the work reprinted here, *Māzandarān and Astarābād*, first published as volume VII of the new series of the E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series (London, 1928, printed in Cairo). Among his other significant contributions in this area are his edition of the *Tārīkh-i Gīlān va Dailamistān* by Ṣahīr al-Dīn Mar‘ashī (Rasht, 1912) and “Les provinces Caspiennes de la Perse: Le Guilan” (Paris, 1917). A fuller picture of his numerous and valuable researches, not least in the field of numismatics, is provided on pp. 167–69 of the current book.¹

Rabino’s *Māzandarān and Astarābād* is a remarkable work, the product of many years of the careful accumulation of information about a region cut off from the Iranian Plateau by the formidable barrier of the Alburz Mountains and enjoying a complex history commensurate with its peculiar physical geography and inaccessible valleys. As the author notes in his brief Preface, in addition to his documentary researches, much of the data was retrieved in the course of two expeditions, one in spring of 1908 and the other between November 1909 and January 1910, the latter providing the chronological framework

¹ See also the brief but appreciative obituary by Vladimir Minorsky in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 84, iii–iv (1952), pp. 180–81, who notes that his work on the Caspian provinces will long remain sources of information.

for Rabino's observations along his itinerary. His Persian introduction is rather more expressive of his fondness for the region, which he calls one of the best parts of Iran for its natural beauty and climate, quoting verses from the *Shāhnāma* story of the reign of Kay Kavus to support this view.² He notes the province's somewhat separate history and the preservation of much of its pre-Islamic culture, as in the use of Pahlavi script on the coinage, until Shāh 'Abbās brought it back into connection with the other regions of Iran. He mentions too the unfortunate fact that it was prey to the destructive raids of the Central Asian nomads who periodically invaded the area – that is, in the Safavid period, the Uzbeks, though many covetous eyes had previously fallen on this rich territories and attempted to subdue them.

The book is a remarkable mixture of gazetteer and travelogue, informed by detailed research not only in the historical sources available (one of which he had edited himself, as noted above),³ but also in the works of previous European and local writers. In the Persian preface he excuses himself for any inaccuracies, due to the impossibility of verifying in person the names of every single village. It is clear, nevertheless, that he had a very intimate knowledge of the territory and a genuine attachment to it. Although he was a British consular official, and wrote reports along with his colleagues as required on the state of the country, its products, inhabitants and communications, the result is a poke in the eye for Edward Said's critique of the orientalist agenda of acquiring knowledge to achieve domination and

² Firdausī, *Shāhnāma*, ed. Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh, vol. II (Costa Mesa & New York, 1990), pp. 4–5, verses 26–31.

³ For a lengthy analysis of the mediaeval chronicles of the region, see Charles Melville, "The Caspian provinces: a world apart. Three local histories of Mazandaran", *Iranian Studies* 33, i–ii (Winter-Spring 2000 [2001]), pp. 45–49.

emphasise western superiority; he does mention (p. 8) that the roads do not lend themselves to “military purposes”, but it is hard to imagine that this was his main concern. Here we have a scholarly and sensitive account of two Iranian provinces full of character and variety.

Among the valuable qualities of *Mázandarán and Astarábád* is the selection of inscriptions provided in the Persian section of the text. These are not directly integrated into the main text, and it is a pity they are not listed separately or cross-referred to, but generally they follow the order of Rabino’s itinerary, the inscriptions in Astarabad, for instance, on pp. 25–52 of the Persian text being described on pp. 73–76 of the English text. The inscriptions themselves are of varying nature and a range of dates, including *waqf* (endowment) deeds, tombstones, foundation and restoration inscriptions and several interesting *farmāns* (decrees), notably from the Safavid era, although 15th century is also well represented as well as the Qajar period, as one would expect, Astarabad being the homeland of the dynasty.

Overall, this is a classic work that has long been out of print,⁴ and an essential resource for subsequent work on the Caspian provinces, which is indeed copious. The late Manouchehr Sotoudeh was a leading figure in this respect, especially in his massive multi-volume work, *Az Astārā tā Istārbād*;⁵ we may also note the numerous contributions of Wilferd Madelung, among many others, to the study of the region, its dynasties and religious sectarian history. All these works continue to draw on

⁴ The WorldCat website states that 25 editions were published between 1928 and 1987 in four languages. The Gibb Memorial Trust archives contain have no details about reprints under its auspices.

⁵ Published by the Anjoman-i Asar-i Melli, 7 vols, Tehran, 1349/1970ff., repr. 1380/2001.

the pioneering efforts of H.L. Rabino, and it is the hope of the Trustees that this reprinted edition and a full-size scan of the excellent accompanying map will allow it to remain accessible to a new generation of scholars.

Cambridge
June 2016

Charles Melville

PREFACE

THE present book is the outcome of persistent research carried on from 1906 to 1922, and of data collected during two journeys in Mázandarán, one in the spring of 1908, the other in the late autumn of 1909¹.

Owing to the official position I held I was debarred from touching upon any subject that savoured of politics, and, because of the cost of printing, I had to suppress all anecdotes, descriptions and quotations, thus reducing the volume to a third of its original size. In its present form the work will, I am afraid, only appeal to the student.

With the papers referred to in pages 167 to 169 of this volume I have now exhausted all the materials I had accumulated, except various papers on agriculture and kindred subjects written in collaboration with the late Monsieur D. F. Lafont, which were irretrievably lost in the sack of Anzálí², and my notes on the dialects of the Caspian provinces and on wood-carving in Gílán and Mázandarán (15th to 18th centuries), which were too sparse for publication.

I am fully sensible of the shortcomings of my work, but am confident, nevertheless, that its perusal will facilitate the work of all such as are desirous of extending their knowledge of the Caspian provinces. There is yet much information to be gleaned either locally, or from the lost chronicles alluded to by Persian historians³, should these ever come to light again.

¹ My itinerary in 1908 was Bandargaz, Astarábád, Ashraf, Sári, Bárfurúsh and Mashhadisar, and in 1909, Rasht, Láhiján, Ámul, Bárfurúsh, Mashhadisar, Farahábád, Sári, Dhaghmarz, Ashraf, Bandargaz, Astarábád, Aq-Qal'a, Gunbad-Qábús, Qumish-tappa, Khwája-Nifís, Astarábád, the Jahánumá Pass, Rádkán and Bandargaz.

² These papers, which were ready for the press, comprised: *La Culture de l'Olivier en Guilan*; *La Filature de la Soie en Perse*; *Essais de Cultures nouvelles en Perse par le Prince Kâchef-es-Saltané*; *Culture des Plantes textiles (Coton, Chanvre, etc.) en Guilan et en Mazandéran*; *Contribution à l'étude de la Faune du Nord de la Perse*; and *Contribution à l'étude de la Flore du Nord de la Perse (comprenant les plantes cultivées, légumes, céréales, etc.)*. The last-mentioned was the most important as it dealt with over one thousand specimens, giving their names in Latin, Persian and local dialect, as well as the industrial or medicinal purposes they serve.

³ The chronicles of Mázandarán which are known to us are:

The *Báwánd-Náma*; the *Ta'rikkh-i-Gáwbara* of Abu'l-Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Yazdádi; the *Kítáb-i-Futúkh-i-Jibál-i-Ṭabaristán* of Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alí ibn Muḥammad al-Madá'íní; the *Ta'rikkh-i-Ṭabaristán* of Mawláná Auliyá'ulláh Ámulí; and the *Ta'rikkh-i-Ṭabaristán* of 'Alí ibn Jamálu'd-Dín ibn 'Alí ibn Maḥmúd an-Najíbí ar-Rúyání. The chronicles of Astarábád and Gurgán are mentioned in page 161, note 99.

I am deeply grateful to Professor E. G. Browne not only for most valuable advice, but also for his generous assistance in the correction of all but the last proofs for the Press. Dr Nicholson kindly undertook to supervise what remained of the publication of the work when Professor Browne was prevented from proceeding with it through ill-health. Mr G. H. Selous, H.B.M. Consul at Casablanca, revised the original text before its final emendation. To M. F. von Stahl and his publishers I am indebted for permission to make full use of his surveys, the results of which were given in Petermann's *Geogr. Mitteilungen*.

The texts of inscriptions given in the appendix relate also to Gílán. I deemed it useful to reproduce them, as many of the original inscriptions have been destroyed in recent years. The misprints which mar the Persian text were due to my inability to superintend personally its printing owing to my transfer from Cairo.

H. L. RABINO.

BRITISH CONSULATE GENERAL, SMYRNA.

26 November, 1925.

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p. 2, note 2. Add: M. R. Vasmer has just pointed out to me that my account of the mountains of Ṭabaristán is erroneous although based on the descriptions of some of the Persian geographers and historians. According to Ṭabarí there were three mountains of Ṭabaristán: that of Wandá Hurmuzd, which was in the centre of Ṭabaristán; that of his brother Wandásfahán, son of Alandá b. Qárin; and that of Sharwín b. Shahryár b. Báu. Ibn Rustah states that the mountain of Wandá Hurmuzd was Damáwand, while al-Faqh informs us that the Banú Sharwín resided in the mountains of Ṭabaristán which bordered on Qúmis. It is evident therefore that Kúh-i Sharwín was to the east, Kúh-i Wandá Hurmuzd in the centre, and Kúh-i Wandásfahán to the west.

- p. 12, l. 11. *Read* Ṣadr-i A'zam.
 p. 14, l. 1. ,, Abu'l-Khaṣīb (cf. Ṭabarí, III, 136).
 p. 14, l. 19. ,, Kayúmarth.
 p. 21, l. 5. ,, 'Abbásábád.
 p. 22, l. 16. ,, Maháll-i Thalátha.
 p. 25, l. 15. ,, al-Mu'ayyad.
 p. 34, l. 13. ,, 'Abdu'lláh b. Kházim.
 p. 34, l. 15. ,, Kházima-Kúy.
 p. 40, l. 15. ,, Áḥ.
 p. 40, l. 20. ,, Áḥ.
 p. 42, l. 16. ,, Talár.
 p. 42, l. 12 from foot. *Read* Talár.
 p. 44, l. 6. *Read* 'Álamdár.
 p. 48, l. 9 from foot. *Read mahall*.
 p. 52, l. 16. *Read* Abu'l-Khaṣīb.
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 p. 66, l. 12. ,, Shiháb.
 p. 74, l. 5. ,, Abú 'Abdu'lláh.
 p. 89, l. 3. ,, 'Ámir.
 p. 93, l. 16 from foot. *Read* Aqíra-jár.

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¹ See also H. L. Rabino, *Le Gilan*, p. 9.

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NOTE ON MİR ZAHÍRU'D-DÍN'S *HISTORY OF*
GÍLÁN AND DAYLAMISTÁN

The work opens as usual with a doxology, followed by a preface in which the author mentions the advantages to be derived from the study of history, states why he wrote the present chronicle, concludes with a panegyric of his benefactor Sultán Muḥammad of Láhiján, and explains the arrangement of his book, which is as follows:

(a) Preface (*muqaddama*). Etymology of Gíl and Daylam.

(b) Chapter I. Rulers of Gílán and Daylamistán prior to the Amír Kiyá'i dynasty. Description of those districts.

(c) Chapter II. Rebellion of Sayyid Amír Kiyá Maláti, to the death of Sayyid 'Alí Kiyá and his brothers at Rasht, in 29 sections (*fás'l*).

(d) Chapter III. Sayyid Hádí Kiyá of Tunakábun drives out of Biyapish the rulers of the Naširwand clan and of Biyapas who had established themselves there after the death of Sayyid 'Alí Kiyá. (5 sections.)

(e) Chapter IV. Rule of Sayyid Rađí Kiyá b. Sayyid 'Alí Kiyá and of Sayyid Muḥammad b. Mahdí Kiyá over Láhiján and Ránikúh. They expel their uncle Sayyid Hádí Kiyá. (18 sections.)

(f) Chapter V. Rule of Kárkiyá Našir Kiyá and of his brother Kárkiyá Amír Sayyid Aḥmad. (17 sections of which two are numbered 5.)

(g) Chapter VI. Rule of Kárkiyá Sultán Muḥammad. (26 sections.)

(h) Chapter VII. Events from 881-894/1476-1489. (19 sections.)

This chronicle was written by Mír Zahíru'd-Dín, so he informs us, under the dictation of Kárkiyá Sultán Muḥammad, in 880/1475-6. It was then carried down year by year to 894/1489 by the author himself.

The only known copy of this work was presented in 1602 to the Bodleian Library (Bodl. Or. 156) (see Ethé's *Bibl. Pers. Cat.*, No. 309, col. 162) by Sir Richard Lee, formerly Ambassador to Russia, who probably received it from one of the companions of Sir Anthony Jenkinson who had visited Gílán.

The manuscript comprises 203 pages and is dated Rabí' I, 993/March 1585. It was apparently copied by a scribe of Láhiján under the dictation of one of his friends. This would explain the numerous mistakes to be attributed to bad hearing, lack of grammatical knowledge, and influence of local dialect.

The handwriting is very clear throughout, and at first very carefully done.

Although intact, the manuscript is incomplete and was copied from an original, some leaves of which had disappeared. Thus there are missing:

(1) The concluding lines of the Preface.

(2) The Introduction.

(3) The first chapter. It has been impossible to fill up this lacuna although I have gathered from Arab and Persian historians notices on local dynasties such as the Wahsúdáníyán, the Muẓaffarís and certain 'Alawí princes who reigned in Gílán and Daylamistán. A section, the loss of which is greatly to be regretted, is that relating to the history and doctrines of the Assassins of Alamút.

(4) The first, second and part of the third sections of the second chapter. These sections contained no doubt the genealogy and early history of the family of Sayyid Amír Kiyá. This information is given briefly in the *Majlísu'l-Mu'minín* of Sayyid Núru'lláh-i-Shustarí.

(5) The conclusion of section 8, sections 9 and 10, and the beginning of section 11 of the fourth chapter. These sections dealt with an expedition to Mázandarán of which an account is given in the author's *History of Tabaristán, Rúyán and Mázandarán*.

Notwithstanding all these lacunæ the manuscript gives us a complete history of the Amír Kiyá'i dynasty of Láhiján from 750 to 894/1349-1489.

Zahíru'd-Dín's *History of Gílán and Daylamistán* is the second book published at Rasht, Gílán, and, though misprints are numerous, the 'Urwa'u'l-Wuthqá Press can be congratulated on having successfully carried out the printing of this volume notwithstanding all sorts of difficulties with which it had to contend, such as want of skilled and literate staff, the closing of the press for four months by the Russian Consul, Mr A. Necrasof, the exile of Áqá Ridá, owner and manager of the press, and the departure of Mr Rabino when the work was only half through the press.

For a biographical notice of Mír Zahíru'd-Dín, see Dorn, *Sehir-eddin's Geschichte von Tabaristan, Rujan und Masanderan*, pp. 13-22.

GLOSSARY

Áb-bandán.	Irrigation reservoir.
Áb-dang.	Tilt hammers for husking rice worked by water power.
Aghúz.	Walnut tree.
Asal <i>or</i> Isstalkh.	Water reservoir.
Ázád.	The Zelkova crenata or Planera crenata.
Bun.	Above.
Charwá.	Turcoman nomad.
Chumúr.	Turcoman cultivator.
Dár.	Tree.
Dunbál <i>or</i> Dunbála.	Overflow canal.
Duwín.	Mound, tumulus.
Gálish.	Herdsmen, cowherd.
Gálish-Nishím.	Camp of cowherds.
Gílak.	Inhabitant of Gílán.
Jú <i>or</i> Júb.	Ditch, canal.
Kalá <i>or</i> Kaláta.	A fortified village.
Kála.	Elevated land not liable to be swamped.
Kíla.	Canal, stream.
Laylakí.	Gleditschia caspica.
Mázú.	Oak.
Rú <i>or</i> Rúd.	River, stream.
Talú.	Thicket (Mázandarámí).
'Ubba.	Turcoman camp.

CHAPTER I

Tabaristán. Limits. Name superseded by that of Mázandarán. Mountains of Tabaristán. Former limits of Mázandarán. Situation. Districts. General description. Mountains. Rivers. Harbours. Communications. Sháh 'Abbás's causeway. Other roads. Climate. Towns. Resources. Population. Sayyids. Tribes. Qájárs. Armenians and Georgians. Jews. Language. Religion. Administration. Military works.

MÁZANDARÁN, formerly known as Ṭabaristán, is a district forming part of the old province of Farshwádgar¹, which comprised Ádharbayján, Áhár, Ṭabaristán, Gílán, Daylam, Ray, Qúmís, Dámghán, and Gurgán (1).

"Ṭabar" has the signification of "mountain" in the local dialect, whence Ṭabaristán would mean "the mountain land²."

The frontier of Ṭabaristán was fixed by Minúchíhr as follows: east, Dínárjárí,—west, the village of Malát, which was to the south of Húsam,—south, the crest of all the mountains whose waters reach the Sea of Ábasgún (the Caspian), which borders the province to the north.

Ṭabaristán (2) thus comprised Gurgán, Astarábád, Mázandarán (3), and Rustamdár, to which were occasionally added Bastám, Dámghán, Fírúzkúh, and Kharraqán.

"In the 7th (13th) century, about the time of the Mongol conquest, the name of Ṭabaristán appears to have fallen into disuse, being replaced by Mázandarán (4), which since that date has been the common appellation of this province....Practically the terms Ṭabaristán and Mázandarán were synonymous, but while the former name was applied primarily to the high mountains, and only included in a secondary use the narrow strip of lowland along the sea-shore running from the Delta of the Safíd Rúd to the south-eastern angle of the Caspian, Mázandarán appears in the first instance to have denoted these lowlands, and then included the mountain region as subsidiary thereto. The name Tabaristán is at the present day obsolete³," although revived for a short period (1250-1290/1834-1873) as a Mint name on coins struck at Sári.

¹ For the derivation of the name Farshwádgar see Darmesteter, "Lettre de Tansar," *Journal Asiatique*, 1894, p. 507.

² Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, Cambridge, 1905, p. 369. For other derivations of the name Ṭabaristán see Dorn, *Reise nach Masanderan im Jahre 1860*, St Petersburg, 1895, pp. 51-52, and for the name Tapuri, *ibid.*, p. 160.

³ Le Strange, p. 369. See also J. Marquart, "Érānšāhr nach der Geographie des Ps Moses Xorenac'i" in *Abhandlung der Königl. Ges. der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Neue Folge, Bd III, 1899-1901, pp. 129-135.

Ibn Ḥawqal in the 4th (10th) century describes three mountain districts of Ṭabaristán. The first was Jabal-i-Fádúsbán, *i.e.* the mountain of Pádúsbán, this being the name of the ruling family, who, as semi-independent chiefs, held Rustamdár from about 45 to 1005/665-6—1595-6. "The whole of this mountain district was covered with villages, of which the largest was named Qaryat Manşúr, 'Manşúr's village,' and another was Uram Khwást with an upper and a lower village, these places all lying about a day's march from Sáriya, but throughout the mountain side there was no town of sufficient size to have a Friday Mosque¹."

Adjoining Fádúsbán was the mountain district called Jabal-i-Qárin after the famous family of that name. This district comprised the present Láriján, Sawádkúh and Hazárjaríb. The third mountain range was the Jabal-i-Rúbanj lying north of Ray, and must have comprised, therefore, the present districts of Áraŋga and Ṭálaqán. It could not possibly have been Ránikúh which is a small district north of the Ishkawar mountains.

Kúh-i-Qárin(š) was the general appellation of the eastern mountain range, but the range of mountains extending from Ámul to Astarábád was itself subdivided into various mountain districts which usually bore the name of some prince of the ruling family. Thus we have Wandád-Ummíd-Kúh immediately south of Ámul; Ummídwár-Kúh which became later Amíra-Kúh; Hurmazd-Kúh, probably the same as the Wandád-Hurmazd-Kúh which was to the east of the Kúh-i-Sharwín on the road to Khurásán (Álárd was in Wandád-Hurmazd-Kúh). Kúh-i-Sharwín lies between Sawádkúh and Fírúzkúh and is known now-a-days as Kúh-i-Shalfín. Shahriyár-Kúh, which Ibn-Isfandiyyár gives as in Farím, was south of Sári and on the road from Dámghán to Ṭabaristán. From Wíma to Ṭabaristán one could pass by Wandáhaza-Kúh; there was also a path over the Shahriyár-Kúh. Wandáhaza-Kúh is mentioned as on the way from Níshápúr to Ṭabaristán; and Farrukhán-Fírúz-Kúh, to which the Ispahbad Khurshíd banished his cousins who had conspired to kill him, may possibly be the present Fírúz-Kúh²(6).

¹ Le Strange, p. 372.

² See Ibn Isfandiyyár's *History of Ṭabaristán*, abridged translation by E. G. Browne, Vol. II. of *E. J. W. Gibb Memorial*, p. 29, lines 13-14, Cháh-i-Wíjan in Ummídwár-Kúh; but for "thence they carry logs and planks to Amul" read "passed by people on their way from Farasp and Pulúr to Amul"; pp. 40-41, Wandád-Hurmazd-Kúh; Ummídwár-Kúh and Pá'íza-Kúh; pp. 41-42, Shahriyár-Kúh.

Gurgán, which included Astarábád, extended from Dínárjarí, the western limit of Dahistán and the eastern limit of Tabaristán, to the forest of Anjadán, the eastern limit of Mázarán. Anjadán was probably not far from Tamísha which was immediately west of the moat dug by the Ispahbad Farrukhán the Great as a protection against the people of Túrán. Astarábád was called Bírún Tamísha, and the extreme eastern districts of Mázarán, Andarún Tamísha¹.

Mázandarán extended from Tamísha and the forest of Anjadán to Namakábrúd which separated it from Rustamdár. The latter district extended originally from Sí-Sangán, or the Mánhír stream, to Malát, but, through the cession of certain territories to the Assassins and the acquisition of certain others which were brought to the Ustundárs by their wives as dowries, the boundaries were removed to Namakábrúd (Namakáwarúd) on the Gílán side and to the Alísharúd west of Ámul.

Eastern Mázarán is often spoken of as Ispahbad or Ispahbadán from the title of its princes, just as Rustamdár was called Ustundáriyya.

Mázandarán "was originally called Múz-Andarún because Múz was the name of a mountain on the confines of Gílán extending as far as Lár-i-Qasrán and Jájarm (7); and since this territory was 'within (the mountain of) Múz,' it received this name²."

Mázandarán lies between the southern coast of the Caspian and the Alburz range, and extends from latitude 35° 45' to 37° and from longitude 50° 40' to 54° 30'. Its boundary on the western side lies to the west of the Surkhání stream; to the east the province is bounded by the *jar*, or ditch, of Kulbád and the Sháh-Kúh range. The greatest length of Mázarán is 292 miles from east to west; in following the sinuosities of the coast, it is, of course, more. Its greatest breadth to the south of Faraḥábád is about 68 miles, of which about one third is flat, the remainder being mountainous.

Mázandarán is divided into 13 districts, viz. Tunakábun, Kalárrustáq, Kujúr, Núr, Ámul, Bárfurúsh, Mashhadisar, Sárí, Faraḥábád, Ashraf, Láriján, Sawádkúh, and Hazárjaríb (8).

Geographically the province may be divided into two distinct

¹ Ibn Isfandiýár gives the names of 28 cities in Andarún Tamísha, thus extending the application of the name to Western Mázarán. See Ibn Isfandiýár, p. 28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 14. For the name Mázarán see Dorn, *Reise*, pp. 58-61 and 157. See also Olshausen, *Mazdoran und Mazanderan* in *Gesammtsitzung der Akademie* of 23 November 1876, Vienna, pp. 777-785.

belts (9); the low, marshy, and impenetrable, jungle-clad plains, varying in breadth from 10 to 30 miles along the coast of the Caspian, and the elevated and forest-clad spurs thrown out from the northern face of Alburz. Both districts, owing to their natural impenetrability, are very difficult of access.

Fraser's description of Mázarán¹ is so excellent that I have quoted freely from it in this chapter²:

"The surface, where not cultivated, consists of natural or artificial swamps, overgrown with forest trees and thorns, particularly bramble bushes of incredible luxuriance and absolutely impenetrable.

"Above the flat space tower the mountains, assuming the appearance of two ranges, the first being clothed with forests as dense as those below, which throw forward spurs and shoulders that sometimes reach the coast. Beyond this wooded and buttressed wall, which is traversed in all directions by the most wild and romantic glens, and which forms a sort of velvet lining to the principal range, the peaks and masses of this last are seen rising in naked, rocky grandeur, and snow-spotted even in September. It is in ascending these that you meet with the most desperate passes, and amongst their recesses, and even on their summits, as well as on those of the wooded hills below, are found the *yayláqs*, or summer quarters, to which the inhabitants resort in the heat of that season. The whole of these wooded mountains are pervaded by paths and passes so intricate that none but an experienced guide can find his way from one place to another; but the long winding tracks that lead through the skirts of the hills and the low plain are equally perplexing and more difficult, following, as they do generally, the windings of streams and rivers that keep to no particular bed, and involving the traveller in swamps, creeks, and quicksands, against which, as they shift with every flood, no experience can guard. It is these dense jungles and swamps which are the breeding-places of all the ill-health and disease, the hosts of flies, insects, and reptiles, and all the other abominations that infest Mázarán.

"The beach which bounds this flat is a strip of sand and gravel, thrown up by the wash of the surf, which is driven against the southern shore with great violence by the prevailing wind from

¹ See Ibn Isfandiyár's description of Mázarán, *History of Tabaristán*, p. 33, lines 2-29 and p. 34, lines 1-6.

² J. B. Fraser, *A Winter's Journey (Tátar) from Constantinople to Tehran*, London, 1838, Vol. 11, p. 468.

the north. In truth, the whole coast is lined by a chain of sand-hills, rising sometimes 25 to 30 feet in height, and 200 yards in breadth, behind which lies a morass of stagnant water from the numerous streams and rivers that, descending from the mountains, are prevented by these sand-hills from finding their way into the sea. Wherever a river does force its way through them, there is a continual battle between it and the surf, which latter throws up a bar that shuts up the channel entirely, so that its waters will accumulate and spread behind the sand-hills for miles, sluggish and dead, only finding their way to the sea by filtration, or very small streams beneath the sand, until a flood enables it to sweep bar and all before it. It is by these stagnant waters or *murdábs* (dead waters), as the natives call them, that the lakes and harbours of Sáliyán, Anzalí, Langarúd, Mashhadisar, Astarábád, and others, have been formed.

“The banks of these dead, or rather back waters, to speak more properly, are overgrown with alders of enormous size, with plane-trees, elms, ashes, poplars, and other trees which love a moist soil; and in the rainy season the country around is all flooded, so as to exhibit the singular spectacle of a boundless forest in a swamp. Yet scattered among these swamps, behind these *murdábs*, and sometimes between them and the sand-hills, the traveller may find numerous villages and clusters of houses inhabited by the cultivators of the rice-fields around. But a stranger would pass a dozen of these, and never suspect the existence of a human being, unless he chanced to see the smoke curling upwards from some of their fires, or to hear the bark of one of their dogs; and yet from each of these *mahallas* there are always several paths leading to the sea-beach, for the inhabitants have a considerable traffic which is carried on by sea, and at certain seasons the people live on fish, salmon, mullets, and other excellent kinds, which come to the coast, particularly in autumn and winter¹.”

The mountain system of Mázarán consists entirely of the northern spurs thrown out from the Alburz range towards the Caspian. The length of these spurs varies from 30 to 50 miles. The distance of the mountains from the coast varies considerably; sometimes, as at Sakhtsar, they sweep down to the sea, forming headlands; at others, they form irregular curves, none of which are far from the Caspian.

¹ Fraser, *l.c.*, p. 470.

The main range is lofty and bare, but the lower hills are covered with every kind of forest tree and slope down by degrees to the belt of virgin forest. They are all of a very difficult and impracticable nature, being covered with dense forest for a great portion of their slopes.

The rivers of Mázandarán all rise in the northern slopes of the Alburz, and consequently none of them have any great length, and are really no more than mountain torrents, most of them being very low in dry weather, but subject to sudden and dangerous rises during and after the melting of snow.

Their names in succession from west to east are as follows: Surkhání, Turkrúd, Áb-i-Sakhtsar, also called Şafárúd or 'Isárúd, Nâranjbun, Palangrúd called lower down Salmrúd (10), Áb-i-Ramak or Ramakábrúd, Shúrâbsar, Áb-i-Sayyid-Maĥalla or Rúda'a, Baríshrúd, Mísha-Kaláya, Pahdarrúd, Niyása-Rúd, Zamínjúb, Júb-i-Pâdangrúd, Chalkrúd, Chawarrúd, Shírrúd or Áb-i-Tahram, Áwsiyá, Wáchak, Fíkárúd, Zamínjúb probably the same as Mackenzie's Naşırkalá, Áb-i-Karímábád, Gúsarí, Mazar, Chashmakíla, Sangsará, Tílpurdsar, Halíkalá, Palátkalá-dunbála (11), Izarúd, Sultánkalá, Nishtárúd, Kázimrúd, Pasandarúd, Galabúsí, Kúchabúsí, 'Abbásábád, Muĥammad-Ĥusaynábád, Ganjarúd, Múmadamarda, Aspchín, Kharrakrúd, Chika-i-Aşgharábád, Chika-i-Gúlúr, Tílrúdsar, Zardkíla, Ispárúd, Chika-i-Khájakasar, Palangrúd (12), Namakábrúd, Nawrúdsar, Ĥacharúd, Dújamán, Sardábrúd, Áwrang or Ábrang, Chálús, Gandábrúd, Kurkrúd, Girdú, Mashánkíla, Sháhmurádkíla, Mashalak, Dirázabál-kíla, 'Alíábádkíla, Sham'járán-Dunbál, Latangán-Dunbál, Amír-Rúd, Marúrdí, Khayr-rúd, Mázígáh, Duzdakarúd, Mulkár stream, Anárwar stream, 'Alíábád stream (13), Núrrúdbár, Khushklát, Şarínkalá (Şaláĥu'd-Dín Kalá), Namakábrúd, Kulírúd or Kalírú, Kunusarúd (14), Shaykhrúd, Kacharúd, Nahr-i-Ĥasanábád, Bun-jákul, Falímarz, Siyáhrúd, Alamrúd, Suladih, Rustamrúd, Háshimrúd, 'Izdih, Alisharúd or Ahlamrúd, Harhaz, Siyáhrúdbár, Ahlama, Shilit, Mullákíla, Surkhrúd, Shírarúd, Faríkinár, Bábul, Mírrúd, Chapukrúd or Tálár, Lárím or Siyáhrúd, Tijin, Niká (falling into the Caspian in four branches: Qal'a-i-'Alí Naqí Bayg, Qal'a Zardí, Gawharbarán and 'Abdu'l-Malikí-Kíla).

Holmes remarked that all the rivers on the Mázandarán coast have a long sandbank at their mouth projecting from the western bank towards the east, at which point they take a turn, flowing almost parallel to the shore before entering the sea; this occurs

even when the rivers approach the coast from a south or south-west direction. From this fact it is evident that the prevailing winds are from the west and north-west, and that the waves running one way and the streams another have gradually raised banks between them.

Most of the rivers of Mázandarán are well stocked with fish.

The principal harbour, if we may call it by this name, is Mashhadisar. The next port in importance is Farikínár, after which comes Farahábád.

There are two made roads leading from Mázandarán to the interior across the Alburz, that from Ámul to Tīhrán, striking the eastern base of Damáwand, and constructed by Gasteiger Khán, an Austrian engineer in the service of Náşiru'd-Dín Sháh, and that from Bárfurúsh to Tīhrán via Sawádkúh, which follows the old causeway. Both are tolerably good.

In 1031/1621¹ was terminated the famous causeway which Sháh 'Abbás the Great had instructed the Wazír of Mázandarán, Mírzá Muhammad Taqí, to construct from Farahábád on the Caspian to Khwár, via Sári, 'Alíábád, Sawádkúh, Halírúd, and Fírúzkúh, a total distance of about 45 *farsakhs*, divided into nine stages. Another causeway was constructed about the same time from Jájarm to the plain of Múghán traversing the whole of the Persian provinces along the southern shore of the Caspian.

The road consisted of a causeway, generally 20 feet wide, and was, apparently, laid down with great care and labour, being paved throughout with large water-worn stones taken from the numerous mountain streams which cross the forest-covered plain, drained by deep ditches, and fenced with a stout hedge of white thorn and wild pomegranate, which is equally thorny and impenetrable; it was not, however, sufficiently raised and no gaps for cross drainage were made. This, with the inevitable Persian indifference to repairs, has rendered it what it is at the present day, a monument to the wisdom of a single sovereign, and a reproachful witness to the neglect of a long line of his successors (15).

To the east of Astarábád, the causeway, in the shape of a wide road clearing the Gurgán pass or gorge 50 miles lower down the valley, is now said to be covered with impenetrable forest, and two

¹ The date of the completion of the causeway is given in the chronogram *kár-i-khayr* = 1031, and not *amr-i-khayr* = 1051, as mentioned by some authors.

ruined hostels known as Rubát-i-'Ishq and Rubát-i-Qarábil (16) alone remain to afford a comparison between the past and the present. The road from Astarábád to Ashraf is so completely ruined through neglect that the traffic of the country generally passes on either side of it, through deep sloughs which are, however, preferable to the broken pavement of the road with its dangerous pitfalls. From Ashraf to Sári the present road for the greater part follows the causeway which is full of deep holes and ruts ; in many places the mud is a yard deep, but a good road might easily be constructed on the foundation of the old one. From Sári to 'Alíábád and thence to Ámul traces of the causeway are still to be seen. From Ámul to Tamíján in Ránikúh the causeway ran through the jungle, and I have heard of a section still in existence between Dániyál and Píshampur in Kálár-rustáq, a distance of about 20 miles. From Tamíján the road skirted the foot of the hills, passing Malát and continuing thence to Láhiján, Rasht and the Múghán plain. The only traces of it in Gílán are seen at Malát, near the former Gúráb-i-Gaskar, and perhaps on the way from Rík in Kargánrúd to Áqavlar, where Fraser thought he saw traces of the famous causeway leading over the mountains to Ardabíl.

The other roads in the interior are a trifle better than those of Gílán, but still are bad enough to occasion great fatigue, if not death, to horses. The only tolerable road from Rúdisar in Gílán to Bárfurúsh, which is always chosen by muleteers, when possible, lies along the sands of the sea-shore ; but experienced guides are necessary to point out the fords of the numerous rivers, which are full of quicksands ; and the fatigue of crossing these streams may be conceived when the number of them is taken into account.

The following is Fraser's description of the internal communications of Mázandarán : Certainly I never saw, nor can I imagine, a stronger or more impracticable country, from a military point of view, than these provinces. Roads—that is, made roads—there are none, except the great causeway, made of old by Sháh 'Abbás, and this has now so nearly disappeared, that it requires a guide to find it ; and, even when found, it would be useless for military purposes, from the numerous breaks and gaps in its course, and from the impenetrable jungle which surrounds it on all sides, and affords cover for all sorts of ambuscades and surprises.

As for their paths, who, except themselves, could discover

them? A dense hedge, a perfect wall of bramble, blackthorn, and thick boxwood, cemented with wild vines, and other creeping plants that run up and overtop the trees, of great thickness, often approaches within 30 yards of the water's edge, and usually terminates in one of those swamps and jungles I have described. No one in his senses would be mad enough to attempt to penetrate it, but a guide will show you a "hole in the wall," a crevice, a thing like a rabbit-run, through which he introduces you to a pathway at first scarcely perceptible, winding like a snake through the bushes, but which increases in size as you get on, not, however, in facility, for it is intersected by at least a dozen deep natural creeks, through the mire and water of which your horse must flounder; or you may have the choice of a precarious bridge of boughs; or, for variety, after a little space you may have to tread through artificial cuts, made for irrigation, no less deep and difficult than the natural creeks, as your poor load-horses soon find out, and which flood the whole vicinity, so that you travel girth-deep in the soil; and thus, if you survive after a circuitous and perilous pilgrimage, you reach the *mahalla* or village.

The climate of Mázarán is universally condemned. It is extremely capricious, and not naturally divided into wet and dry, or cold and hot, seasons: one year it pours for a month without cessation, and the same month in the next year may be quite dry. Though not nearly so damp as Gílán, it must be termed a humid climate, for there is no day throughout the year in which the people can rely on dry weather. The rainfall is five times as great as it is to the south. From December to April are the wettest, as also the coldest, months. The summers are very hot, and the weather then is subject to very great changes of temperature, which occasion much sickness. It is the same in winter; the inhabitants are then sometimes forced to throw off their warm clothes, and in summer they are obliged to have recourse to their *pústins*, or sheepskin cloaks, and furs. Snow often falls heavily, and though it does not remain so long as in the higher country to the south, it is a mistake to think that it does not lie at all. The cold of summer is damp and unwholesome, causing many diseases. Rheumatisms and dropsies are common, and complaints of the eye still more so. . . . Many of the inhabitants certainly have a sallow look, but others are remarkably sturdy and athletic¹.

¹ Fraser, *l.c.*, p. 48.

Along the sea-shore fevers are less prevalent than on the skirts of the hills.

The principal towns in Mázandarán are Sári, the capital, Bár-furúsh, the centre of trade, Māshhadisar, and Ashraf.

The chief products of Mázandarán are rice, cotton, a little sugar¹, and a variety of fruits.

“The whole extent of the country, between the foot of the hills and the sea, is said to present a succession of large and populous villages, embosomed indeed in wood, quite surrounded also with cultivation; the greater part of this is rice, for which the country is best adapted.

“The land in Mázandarán yields only one full crop in the year, but barley is sown occasionally in spring, for horses and cattle, as a green crop; after it is cut they plough up the ground and plant it with rice².”

Silk cocoons are exported to Milan and Marseilles via Russia; some silk is reeled locally and used in native manufactures, mixed with cotton. Beans, wheat, and barley are grown in the mountainous districts, and some flax in the lowlands. During the winter a great many labourers come from the upper country and are employed here.

The principal fruits are a great variety of the orange, lemon and citron species. These are evergreens, and in winter give a lively and cheerful appearance to the gardens, which are filled with them. There are also to be found apples, pomegranates, quinces, pears, peaches, walnuts, grapes, and melons. The vines are seen climbing the trunks of the forest trees, and their stems are sometimes 8 and 10 inches in diameter.

Mázandarán produces mineral pitch, which is found in abundance in different states, from petroleum to the choicest kind of naphtha, and is applied to many useful purposes. Iron also is produced.

The cattle of Mázandarán are very small and have humps like the Indian cattle: the sheep are likewise small, and have not fat tails, like those of 'Irāq.

The mountains of Mázandarán abound with wild beasts; among others the tiger, panther, bear, wolf, goat, deer of different kinds, and wild boars are found in great quantities. Pheasants,

¹ See D. F. Lafont et H. L. Rabino, “Culture de la canne à sucre en Mázandérân,” *Revue du Monde Musulman*, Paris, Vol. XXVIII, Sept. 1914, pp. 237-243.

² Fraser, *l.c.*, p. 86.

woodcocks, and wild ducks are abundant all over the province. All the rivers are exceedingly well stocked with fish, which is the staple food of the peasantry¹.

The Mázaránís (17) are a somewhat more manly race than the Gílaks, although there is not much difference between the two. This is perhaps owing to the fact that a great portion of them reside in the mountains in summer, as also to the smaller weight of taxation they have to endure. As far as honesty goes they are no better than they should be, and they are far inferior in point of intelligence to the Gílak: *en revanche* they are of sturdier build (18).

“The intellect of the Mázaránís has been decried by the rest of their countrymen, as was that of the Boeotians by the Greeks, for stupidity and brutality, but, I suspect, on no sufficient grounds².” The poor classes are extremely ignorant, and according to our ideas can be considered but slightly civilized. The bigotry of the people in religious matters is great but concerns chiefly matters of ritual (19), and many indulge in liquor and opium, whilst the women of Sári have the reputation of being of easy virtue.

Sayyids in Mázarán are countless. At the death of Imám Ridá, his relatives sought refuge in Daylam and Ṭabaristán, where some of them suffered martyrdom, their tombs (20) becoming celebrated. Their descendants, however, remained there. When Yaḥyá b. ‘Umar b. Yaḥyá b. Ḥusayn rebelled at Kúfa and claimed to be an *imám* amongst the sect of Zayd, such of the *sayyids* as escaped from the battle in which he was captured fled to Ṭabaristán and Daylam. Under Sayyid Ḥasan b. Zayd, *sayyids* of the House of ‘Alí and the Banú-Ḥáshim began to flock to Ṭabaristán from Hijáz, Syria and ‘Iráq, “like unto the number of the leaves on the trees,” and this continued under the other ‘Alid rulers.

In addition to the aborigines of the province and *ʿlls* (21), there are many tribes disseminated over the country: ‘Abdu’l-Malikís, Khwájawands, Laks, Giraylís, Úşánlús, Balúchís, Afgháns, and Kurds, who have been brought into Mázarán at different periods by various Persian Monarchs, and who hold their land

¹ For further information on the resources and trade of Mázarán see Diplomatic and Consular Reports, No. 4812, Annual Series, *Report for the year 1910-11 on the trade and general condition of the city of Barfrush and the Province of Mazanderan*, by H. L. Rabino.

² Fraser, *l.c.*, p. 478.

by virtue of military service. They have become so mingled with the country folk that they cannot be distinguished from them; apart from the Kurds and a few Turks, they have altogether forgotten their original languages and are now Mázandaránís to all intents and purposes.

The 'Abdu'l-Malikís were at first settled at Darragaz; they were subsequently removed to Shíráz, and thence to Shahriyár, where they spent three years. Áqá Muḥammad Khán later transplanted them to Núr, where they remained for 40 years. They then left their country for their country's good, being moved on by Mírzá Áqá Khán Núrî Sadr-i-'Azam, about the year 1855, to Dhághmarz in the neighbourhood of Sárí. The territory they now occupy extends from Nawdharábád in Miyándúrúd on the west, to Qarátappa on the east, and from Atrap and Láktaráshán in Qarátughán on the south, to the Caspian. The Khwájawands are originally from Luristán. They were brought from Ardalán and Garrús to Western Mázandarán by Áqá Muḥammad Khán Qájár, together with the 'Abdu'l-Malikís from Shahriyár, to protect the capital, Tíhrán, against any rising of the inhabitants of these parts, then noted for their turbulence.

The Laks inhabit Kalárdasht.

The Giraylís were brought to Mázandarán from Kálpúsh by Áqá Muḥammad Khán and are to be found in Andarúd, Miyándúrúd and Qarátughán. Like the Úşánlús they are a Turkish race. The Úşánlús were also imported by Áqá Muḥammad Khán. They numbered 150 families in the town of Sárí and many others in the villages, but are now dispersed.

We find a few Tálîsh in Kulít and others dispersed in the neighbourhood of the former Royal Residences of Mázandarán, and in the district of Tunakábun. A few Qawí Hîşárlús reside in the latter district. Sheil estimated the number of Qájárs in Mázandarán at 2000 families¹. Their number is now greatly reduced.

The few Balúchís, who came from the province which bears their name, numbered about 30 or 40 families settled in Sárí, but none are now to be found. Some 30 families of Afgháns had settled at Sárí but were massacred during some disturbances many years ago. There are still 60 families of Ghilzá'í Afgháns at Qarátappa, who were first brought to Mázandarán by Nádir.

¹ Lady Sheil, *Glances of Life and Manners in Persia*, London, 1856, notes by Sir Justin Sheil.

At his death they retired to the neighbourhood of the Gúklán country, but were brought back here by Áqá Muḥammad Khán.

The Kurdish tribes of Jahánbayglú and Mudánlú inhabited the villages of Shírkhwást, Miyánrúd, and Farahábád. The Mudánlús were, in Sir Justin Sheil's time, the most important tribe of Mázandarán. Jahánbayglús are reported as residing in Andarúd, Chapukrúd, and at Mashhadganjrúz; Mudánlús at Mishkábád, Júbár, Panbachúlí, Kurdkalá, and Lárím; Zayds at Isfandín.

Another important Turkish tribe is that of Imránlú which is settled in the village of Galúgá.

A few Arabs were brought to Eastern Mázandarán by Áqá Muḥammad Khán, and they introduced buffaloes into Mázandarán.

Some Gúdar families, Bankashís, Barbars and Karáchís or gypsies are also to be found in Mázandarán¹.

Of the 30,000 families of Armenians and Georgians brought to Mázandarán by Sháh 'Abbás (1585-1628 A.D.) few if any remain. They have either succumbed to the climate or been absorbed by the native population.

There are over 700 Jews in Bárfurúsh. In 1859 the *kadkhudá* told Mackenzie² that the colony to which he belonged had been formed from the remnants of those Jewish colonies planted in Mázandarán by Sháh 'Abbás, who, in accordance with his usual policy, established many Armenians and Jews on the Caspian.

The total population of Mázandarán is estimated by Demorgny³ at between 250,000 and 300,000 souls.

The inhabitants generally speak Mázandarání (22), an 'old Persian dialect. In Tunakábun Gílakí is spoken, whilst Kurdish is the language of the Kurdish tribes, and Turkish, but to a lesser degree, that of the tribes of Turkish origin. In the towns Persian is the usual language.

Zahíru'd-Dín informs us that the first follower of Islám to come to Tabaristán was Hasan b. 'Alí, who was accompanied by 'Abdu'lláh b. 'Umar, Málík b. al Hárith al-Ashtar, and Qutham b. al 'Abbás, and that this occurred during the caliphate of 'Umar.

At the time of the conquest of Mázandarán by the Arabs, the people of Sárí, who, like their brethren of Tabaristán, were fire-

¹ For further information regarding these tribes see H. L. Rabino, Diplomatic and Consular Report, Annual Series, No. 4812, pp. 21-24.

² Capt. F. Mackenzie, *Report on the Persian Caspian Provinces*, Resht, 1859-1860. Unpublished.

³ Demorgny, *Organisation du Ministère de l'Intérieur*, Téhéran, 1331, p. 48.

worshippers (23), embraced Islám under Abu'l-Khudayb and became Shí'ites. When Ámul was occupied by 'Umar b. 'Alá, the people, being disgusted with the Ispahbad's arrogance, came in in crowds and embraced Islám. They were apparently at first of the Málíkí sect and the old Masjid-i-Jámi' of Ámul, called in Zahíru'd-Dín's time (880/1475-6) Ṭashtazanán, was built by people of that sect.

When Mázyár (d. 224/839) cast off his allegiance to the Caliph, he resumed the Zoroastrian girdle and treated the Muslims with contempt. He conferred various offices and distinctions on Bábak, Mazdak, and other Magians who ordered the Muhammadan mosques to be destroyed and all traces of Islám to be removed.

Hasan b. Zayd (250-270/864-884), when his authority was firmly established, issued a proclamation to all the regions of Ṭabaristán, bidding them add the Shí'ite clause *ḥayya ila khayri'l-'amal* to the call to prayer, and to say the *bismi'lláh* aloud in their prayers, and the like¹.

The people of Rustamdár were Sunnís, but Malik Kayumarth b. Bísitún (807-857/1404-1453) compelled the people of Rúyán and Rustamdár to embrace the tenets of the Shí'ites, with the exception, however, of the inhabitants of the village of Kadír who presented him with 700 geldings in order to be allowed to remain Sunnís. Two centuries later people of that sect were still to be found in the village.

Amongst the Shí'ites the Imámí doctrines prevailed, although there were many followers of Zayd, especially in Tunakábun. It was only under the Safáwís that the Imámí doctrines became universally accepted amongst the Shí'ites of Mázandarán.

At present the majority of the inhabitants of Mázandarán are Shí'ites, but amongst the Kurdish tribes there are still many 'Alí-alláhís and a few Sunnís.

The Bábís secured many adherents in Mázandarán towards the middle of last century, and the stand which they made at Shaykh Ṭabarsí against the Sháh's troops is one of the great episodes of their history².

The administration of Mázandarán is entirely in the hands of the governor general, and all the governors of the different

¹ This proclamation is given in Ibn Isfandiyár, p. 175.

² See E. G. Browne, *Materials for the study of the Bábí religion*, Cambridge, 1918, p. 241.

districts in the plain are appointed by him. The governorships of Tunakábun, Kalárrustáq, and Kujúr, and those of the mountain districts of Láríján, Sawádkúh, and Hazárjarífb, were until quite recently hereditary.

The revenue of the province was said to be about 150,000 *túmáns*, but it is not known what proportion of this amount reached the Imperial Treasury.

There are no modern military works in the province, but at various times in olden days strong works were erected to protect Mázandarán from invasion. These works are: (1) The famous Sadd-i-Anúsharwán, or Qizil-Álán wall, which was erected by Anúsharwán (531-578 A.D.) to protect the Gurgán valley against invasions by the wild Túránian tribes, Úzbaks, Turkomans, etc. (24). (2) The Fírúzkanda, a ditch or moat made by Fírúz Sháh, husband of Ámula the founder of Ámul, from Gurgáni to Múghán on the sea-shore. (3) The dyke of Farrukhán the Great¹, traces of which may yet be seen at Kharába Shahr, the former limit of Mázandarán, the country east of it being termed Bírún-Tamísha, and that west of it Andarún-Tamísha. (4) The wall built by Mázyár from Jájarm to Gílán, where there were gates. Every gate had a keeper, and no one was allowed to leave or enter the place which was called Máz, and inside it Mázandarán. (5) The Jar-i-Kulbád, or Kulbád moat, dug during the reign of Karím Khán by Muḥammad Khán of Sawádkúh, then governor of Mázandarán, to protect Ashraf and eastern Mázandarán from the depredations of the Turkomans. (6) The Sháh-Marz, east of Astarábád and between that city and the Qarású, probably dug under Násiru'd-Dín Sháh by order of the Atábak, Muḥammad Taqí Khán, as part of his defensive scheme against the Turkomans.

¹ See Ibn Isfandiyár, pp. 30-31.

CHAPTER II

Rasht to Khurramábád. Bazaar of Kúchisfahán. Safid-Rúd. Láhtján. Langarúd. Kilidbar. Rúdisar. Nawdih. Miyándih. District of Sakhtsar, products, language, inhabitants. The hot springs of Áb-i-Garm. District of Gulayján, inhabitants. The Amír-i-As'ad.

NOV. 14th, 25 miles. From Rasht we followed the road constructed a few years ago by the Sipahdár-i-A'zam, passed the bazaar of Ájbísha, the village of Khúnácháh, the canal of Khumámród, Gúrábjúr, the canal of Hájjí Bikanda and that of Gílámúsh, and the village of Balasabuna, and reached the Gaysha-damarda canal. This name means in *gilak* "dead bride," and the legend is that a young bride, whilst being taken to the bridegroom's house, was drowned at this spot. We crossed the Nawród, also called Lálarúd, by the Murghánapur, "chicken-egg bridge." We were told that an old woman spent the best part of her life selling eggs at this crossing, and that with her hard-earned savings she built this bridge, which ascends at a steep slope from both sides, thus forming an angle or point in the centre. The bazaar of Kúchisfahán consists of two rows of shops with a gateway at the western end, but open to the east. These bazaars, called *gúrdáb*, are places where markets are held periodically, and they are usually destitute of inhabitants on other days. Such bazaars are only found in Gílán and western Mázandarán, and, as a rule, they should be at least 4 miles distant from one another. An hour's ride from Kúchisfahán brought us to Rashtábád on the left bank of the Safid-Rúd, from which Láhiján is 8 miles distant.

After crossing the Gíwdarra or Siyáhrúd by a brick bridge near Gúka, we saw near the village of Tijin-Gúka the shrine of 'Alí Ghaznawí, a descendant of Imám Ja'far. The strong stream of Shímrúd, which rises in the mountains of Daylamán, and flows into the Safid-Rúd, is crossed by a pointed bridge of brick (the angle to the summit of which is certainly not less than 30°) consisting of two large centre arches and a smaller one on each side. Forging the Surkhwáy, a very small stream, though boasting the traces of a former bridge, we soon afterwards crossed the Láhiján river and entered the town.

The women in Láhiján, as in Langarúd, turn their faces to the wall whenever they meet anyone of consequence in the street, this being a sign of respect as well as of modesty on their part.

Nov. 17th, 24 miles. On leaving Láhiján we passed the *Sabz-Maydán* with its lake, and held on in an easterly direction. Two miles further on we came upon the picturesque shrine of Shaykhánbar with its blue tiled dome. The road winds along the slope of the low hills as far as Lílakúh, and is bordered with trees and boxwood. For nearly 7 miles from Láhiján the road has the same low wooded hills with stony blocks on their sides to the right, and jungle, rice fields, and mulberry plantations, intermixed with occasional *tilimbars* or silk granaries and houses, sloping down to the left; it follows generally the line of the old route constructed by Sháh 'Abbás, but at Lílakúh, one mile from Langarúd, it leaves the old causeway, which turns to the right towards Malát near the mountains. The villages passed on the way from Láhiján to Langarúd were: Chahárkhánasar, Nakhjírkaláya, Qaṣṣáb-Maḥalla, Shaykhánbar, Sayyid Maḥalla, Naḡashar, Liyáristán, Dizbun, Díwshal, and Lílakúh. Outside Langarúd there is an open plain, and the road which was nearly east is raised above the rice fields. The last village belonging to the Langarúd district is Kíkaláya; its houses were all thatched and evidently belonged to cultivators in easy circumstances. At Dariyázar, a small stream running down from an *istalkh* or reservoir, fed by the Shalmán, is crossed by a most picturesque bridge with a thatched roof. We then entered the Shalmán district of Ránikúh and crossed the Gilsafíd and Fatídih streams, both branches of the Shalmán, which latter we forded at a point where there is a large village on the right bank.

The Balísa stream, which joins the Shalmán, is crossed by a brick bridge. The road here is bordered by *túsa* and much *shund*, or *palam* (*Sambucus Ebulus*), which reaches to a height of five or six feet. We passed Chiníján and the Miyánpushta, another tributary of the Shalmán, beyond which lies the village of the same name. The Rúdisar river is crossed by a very lofty and very steep bridge. The bazaar of Rúdisar is built like a huge caravanserai with four entrances.

Outside Rúdisar is an old grave-yard called the cemetery of Mullá Amíra; it is an open space covered with grass and adorned with venerable *ásád* trees. Before coming to the Caspian, we passed the Shírarúd, a branch of the Pulúrúd, and crossed the Kaldarra, which is no doubt the Nawrúd mentioned by Holmes and Mackenzie. We then came to the Dústkúh stream about 2 miles from Shírarúd. After the Dústkúh stream we crossed

five small *rudkhánas*: (1) the Rúd-i-Bálálám or Rúd-i-Gaskarí-Mahalla, (2) the Nawdarra, called by Mackenzie Sálú-Mahalla, (3) another branch of the Nawdarra stream, (4) the Gílakján stream, and (5) another stream the name of which is given by Mackenzie as Shír Mahalla.

About 2 miles from the Dústkúh we came to the Pulúrúd, a large river which rises in the Sumám-Kúh. Leaving Kíkaláya and Límújú to our right, we crossed the Gizáfrúd and reached Nawdih where we stayed the night.

Nov. 18th, 16 miles. Outside Nawdih we crossed the lazy stream of Lazarján and a little further on the Áb-i-Khushkalát (25), which is very broad and in springtime can only be forded higher up at the hamlet of Rađí Mahalla; then followed two streams belonging to Siyáhkalarúd, and another one near the village of Cháyján. The country here is well wooded. From the mouth of the Khushkarúd to the river of Qásimábád is about 4 miles. We then came to the Úshiyán Rúd, beyond which are a few brooks (26), and then comes the muddy Acharúd, also called Khushkalát. The mountain here approaches to within 2 miles of the coast. A bit of jungle and the Chashma-i-Malikjúb had still to be traversed before reaching Chábuksar and its stream. The village of Miyándih, which lies concealed in the forest, is 2 miles from Safíd Tamísha. The Júrdih hills, to which many of the people of Tunakábun retreat in summer, rose above us to the right, whilst in front, the Sakhtsar hills, and to the S.S.E. the Mázandarán hills, were visible in the distance. After the Ismalí rivulet we came to the Surkhání, a stream which forms the boundary of Gílán and Tunakábun in Mázandarán, and on the further side of which are the pastures of Safíd-Tamísha. Rounding the Sakhtsar hills, which here reach very nearly to the water's edge, we continued through the jungle to Dariyápushta which numbers thirty houses, boasts a mosque and a shrine, and is rich in fields and mulberry plantations. We forded the Turkrúd and rode through Ákhúnd Mahalla with its mosque and *madrasa* and numberless orange trees. The next features of our ride were the Šafárúd or Áb-i-Sakhtsar, the fine village and stream of Náránjbun and the hamlet of Siyáhlam, after which we reached Áb-i-Garm, our halting place for the day.

Sakhtsar is a small district of Tunakábun and extends from the Surkhání stream on the west to the Nasiya Rúd on the east; to the south it is bordered by the Ishkavar mountains of Gílán