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# PRESENTING THE MANUSCRIPT

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## A KURDISH CHRONICLE FROM QUM

For centuries, the Kurdish region of Perso-Ottoman frontier was an important centre for identity and political struggles between Persian and Ottoman Empires as well as for the spread of Kurdish nationalism in Kurdistan. An interesting hitherto unknown chapter in the history of nationalist contacts between Kurds and Perso-Ottoman communities of the region is *Tārīkh-i Akrād*, an unpublished manuscript from the Mar‘ashī Library, in Qum, the contribution of the 19th century unknown Persian diplo-

mat and historian, Nazīrī. *Tārīkh-i Akrād* is of importance for the history of Kurdish nationalism and especially the rebellion of ‘Ubayd Allāh Nahrī (d. 1883) [1]; the first unpublished manuscript from the time of rebellion in which many detailed primary materials are given. In this paper I will draw attention to this work and will retrace the history of struggles between ‘Ubayd Allāh and Persians. The very brief survey offered here focuses firstly on manuscript and then its contents.

### Manuscript

The Qum Mar‘ashī Library contains hundreds of important Arabic and Persian manuscripts, usually the best of those available in the Middle East, which belong to the Mar‘ashī family. Since the collection has its own published catalogues [2], I only focus on *Tārīkh-i Akrād* which attracted no attention yet. The Qum manuscript of *Tārīkh-i Akrād* (accession No. 9777) (figs. 1—2), the unique manuscript of the whole of the text, is described by Mar‘ashī librarians in a single sentence [3].

The manuscript is divided into 30 *‘unwāns*, each of which is in a sense of self-contained yet dependent on the others. The text is written in the Arabic script in the

Persian language by the author himself. He has written manuscript in type of *nasta‘līq* in Tabrīz. *Tārīkh-i Akrād* begins with *basmala* and the author gives the date Rabī‘ al-Awwal 1299 AH on the last folio of this chronicle. The manuscript is of 75 folios and the size of each folio is 16.5×20.5 cm. The text takes up both sides of the folio, with 10 lines on each side. The pagination is late and Oriental. The paper is probably of European manufacture and the binding is late of brown *tīmāj* leather. There are some Persian *bayts* or verses coming immediately before and after the *‘unwāns*. There are also some Librarian seals and Arabisms in the text; and crossed-out words which did not fit in the line.

### Contents

The author of this chronicle has produced an interesting, challenging, and sometimes polemical history in the realm of Nehrī rebellion. At the beginning he asserts that the basic factor common to all the Kurds is roguishness (*bī sar wa pā*) and ‘Ubayd Allāh is a stupid *shaykh* (*shaykh-i nādān*). So it follows that “Kurdish request” is part and parcel of their roguishness, nothing more. It is with this basic opinion, as a Persian nationalistic trend against the Kurds, that Nazīrī proceeds to consider the various events under the rebellion of ‘Ubayd Allāh.

One by one, from the standpoint of the above mentioned “basic factor”, he first of all discusses the Kurdish tribes of Nehrī region, *Shaykh* Ṭāhā, father of *Shaykh* ‘Ubayd Allāh, their situation, life, and religion. The au-

thor, who probably has travelled extensively in Kurdish areas, gives a personal account of the first steps of ‘Ubayd Allāh’s rebellion as the “king of Kurdish tribes” (*sultān al-‘ashā‘ir*), a title which ‘Ubayd Allāh chose for himself (p. 5). Following a brief chapter on *Shaykh* ‘Ubayd Allāh, son of *Shaykh* Ṭāhā and his arrival to Urmīya (p. 9), the author turns to a consideration of *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Qādir and Kurdish troops marching to Ushnawīya, Sāwujbulāgh, and Suldūz (p. 14). In the next chapter the author significantly points out the war between *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Qādir and Mīyānduāb’s army in which ‘Abd al-Qādir was the final winner and many people of Mīyānduāb and Marāgha were killed (p. 20). The chronicle is in further sections dealing with ‘Ubayd Allāh’s letter to Persian officials