Fazel-Khan Garrusi, alias Rāvī ("Story-Teller") and Šaydā ("Madly in Love"), was a Persian poet, prose-writer and scientist of the Qajar period.

Despite his considerable role in the development of the Persian literature, and the new Persian prose in particular, he enjoyed very little interest by both Persian and European researchers.

The first Iranian author, who introduced Fazel-Khan to the reader, was Reza-Qoli-Khan Hedayat.1 The data collected in his Anthology became a source for all the subsequent authors: Ebrahim Sařayi,2 Yahya Aryanpur,3 Mehdi Bamdad,4 and Sa‘îd Nafisi.5 The Western European Orientalists have been even less inquisitive about Fazel-Khan’s personality and literary writings. Edward Brown6 and Jan Rypka7 have made only a slight mention of his Anthology Anfoman-c xaqān, “The Gathering of Rulers”. As to the Soviet scholars,8 they focused mainly on the poet’s encounter with Pushkin in the Caucasus and his part in the Iranian “Mission of Redemption”.9

The data available on the initial, “Iranian” period of the poet’s life are more or less corroborative. He was born in the village Gar-

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3 Yahya Aryanpur, Az Saba‘i tā Nimā, j.1, Tehran, 1351/1972: 54-58.
9 In 1829 in connection with the murder of A. S. Griboevod in Iran, the Shah sent the so-called "Mission of Redemption" to St. Petersburg headed by Khosrow-Mirza, also attended by Fazel-Khan Garrusi.

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rus of the Bijar region, province Hamadan in 1784. In his younger years he had briefly considered a clerical career, travelled extensively, particularly in Iraq where he updated his knowledge showing no ordinary abilities in Arabo-Persian calligraphy. Back in Tehran, he remained at the Fath Ali-Shah’s court as a herald first, and later as a secretary for special affairs, to become a poet-laureate under the Crown prince Abbas-Mirza, as well as the tutor for Khosrow-Mirza. He had written a lot of poems and epistolary prose, though only part of his writings has been preserved and published. Several specimens retained from the literary legacy of Fazel-khan show the extraordinary talent of the poet. His epistolary prose is of a special interest: the clear-cut business letters are distinctly differentiated from the medieval bombastic prose, so that it was indeed a daring busting of the existing canons in the domain of language and style. Fazel-Khan, along with Qayem-maqam Farahani, in fact, was very instrumental in instituting the New Persian prose. Interestingly, the Institute of Manuscripts, the Georgian Academy of Sciences, retains several letters of Qayem-maqam Farahani to Garrusi. It is obvious from these letters that Garrusi was a highly popular and estimated writer among the Iranian intellectuals of his time. Farahani, for instance, wrote: “My eyes have never seen anyone equal to you, Fazel... Your eloquence removes starts from heaven and withdraws pearls from the sea... A minute-long encounter with you is tantamount to a century of separation... Your letters revive the dead and heal the sick... They are even envied by Mani and Arzhang... Nothing has ever been written better than your Anthology The Gathering of Rulers”.

By 1829 the peaceful period in Fazel-Khan’s life was terminated opening the way to the next one: travelling in Russia, the intriguing scheming at the Shah’s court, getting away from Iran and

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10 In early 1970s a part of Fazel-Khan’s manuscripts were found (see Персидские и таджикские рукописи “Новой серии”, ГПБ им. М.Е. Сатпирова-Щеприна, Алфавитный указатель, Ленинград, 1973: 10, N 31, ПНС 458; А.З. Розенфельд, op. cit.: 229).
11 Д. Комиссаров, op. cit.: 27.

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