



AMĪR NEZĀM

AMĪR(-E) NEZĀM, the holder of the military and administrative office of *emārat-e nezām* in the Qajar period. In the absence of any reference to this post in Safavid, Afsharid, and Zand sources, there is little doubt as to its Qajar origin. It first appears as a top ranking military post—perhaps equivalent to generalissimo—in the Azarbaijan army sometime in the third decade of the 19th century within the context of the military reform known as *nezām-e jadīd* introduced by the crown prince ‘Abbās Mīrzā (between 1227/1812 and 1244/1828). The *amīr-e nezām*, who as a rule resided in Azarbaijan, was initially the commander-in-chief of the crown prince’s forces, though from 1251/1835 onward his post became more crucial: He was made chief steward (*pīškār*), tutor, and supervisor to the heir apparent; he thus had duties not unlike those of the Saljuq atabeg and Safavid *lala*. In effect he controlled the most important province of the realm, supervising both its military and administrative affairs (*laškarī va kešvarī*). The Qajars appointed to this post some of their most capable and trusted officials, often from military backgrounds. The first to hold it, Moḥammad Khan Zangana (d. 1257/1841), was already discharging dual responsibilities towards the end of ‘Abbās Mīrzā’s time, when both the crown prince and his minister Mīrzā Abu’l-Qāsem Qā’em-maqām were out of the province (H. Nāṭeq, “‘Abbās Mīrzā va Torkamānān-e Korāsān,” *Az māst ka bar māst*, 3rd ed., Tehran, 2537 = 1557 Š./1978, pp. 85-88). After the death of Moḥammad Khan (1257/1841), the title was not again conferred until Šawwāl, 1264/September, 1848, when it was given by Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah to Mīrzā Taqī Khan Wazīr-e Nezām; now the office encompassed “all affairs of the state;” one month later, still addressed as Amīr-



e Neẓām, the latter was promoted to the premiership (F. Ādamīyat, *Amīr Kabīr va Īrān*, 3rd ed., Tehran, 1348 Š./1969, p. 197). Throughout his premiership Mīrzā Taqī Khan was addressed with this title rather than Amīr-e Kabīr, which was seldom used in official correspondence. Upon the downfall of Mīrzā Taqī Khan in 1268/1851, Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah officially abolished the office of *amīr-e neẓām* and banned the title (*Waqāye‘-e ettefāqīya*, no. 44, 10 Šafar 1268/1851; cited in Ādamīyat, *Amīr Kabīr*, pp. 211-12). This attempt to reassert the traditional division between the military and administrative spheres was aimed at guaranteeing the shah’s direct control over both. Except for a brief period (1270-74/1853-57) during which Nāṣer-al-dīn conferred the title of Amīr Neẓām on his son and heir apparent Moḥammad Qāsem Mīrzā (d. 1274/1857 at the age of four; see *Rejāl* III, p. 464-65), the ban remained in force. After 1275/1858 the joint supervision of the army and administration of Azarbaijan (particularly under ‘Azīz Khan Mokrī Sardār-e Koll) in effect revived the earlier function of amīr-e neẓām on a reduced scale, though without the use of the title. In 1298/1881 Moḥammad Raḥīm Khan ‘Alā’-al-dawla (d. 1299/1881-82) was appointed chief steward of the crown prince Moẓaffar-al-dīn Mīrzā and given the title Amīr Neẓām, though the full restoration of the office did not come until the chief stewardship and governorship of Ḥasan ‘Alī Khan Garrūsī (d. 1317/1900), who received the title of Amīr Neẓām in 1302(1884-85 and remained in charge of Azarbaijan until 1309/1891 and again between 1315-16/1898-99. After Ḥasan-‘Alī Khan, the office of *amīr-e neẓām* as it existed in his time disappeared. Maḥdī-qolī Khan Hedāyat, who was appointed governor of Azarbaijan in 1326/1908, alludes to the futility of acquiring the title (*Kāṭerāt o kaṭarāt*, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1344 Š./1965, p. 167). The sale of offices in the late Qajar period turned this post, like many other military ranks, into a ceremonial title. ‘Abdallāh Khan Qaragozlū, a wealthy landowner who served as finance minister in two short-lived cabinets in 1328/1910 and 1333/1914, was the title’s last recipient; in his case it had no connection either to the army or the administration of Azarbaijan (*Rejāl* II, pp. 296-97).

See also ‘Alā’-al-dawla, Amīr Kabīr, [Amīr Neẓām Garrūsī](#), Amīr Neẓām Zangana (supp.).



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Given in the text.

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