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ARMY V. QAJAR PERIOD

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i. The early Qajar army.

At the end of the 18th century, the military forces of the first Qajar ruler Āḡā Moḥammad Khan (r. 1789-97) resembled those of preceding dynasties (see ARMY iv. Afšar and Zand). Several contemporary accounts of the army in the late 18th and early 19th centuries have been left by European observers, such as Louis-François de Ferrieres-Sauveboeuf, George Forster, Guillaume Antoine Olivier, Paul-Ange-Louis de Gardane (see Gardane Mission), James Morier, Moritz von Kotzebue, J. M. Tancoigne and Pierre-Amédée Jaubert. According to these descriptions, in peacetime there was no standing army at all, although the shah's household possessed a permanent military establishment.James Morier (1812, pp. 242-43) described Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah (r. 1797-1834) in 1809 as having a bodyguard of 12,000 soldiers (sing. *jānbāz*), mainly drawn from Mazandaran and the Qajar tribes, and 3,000 slave horsemen (sing. *ḡolām*; see BARDA and BARDADĀRI v. Military slavery in Islamic Iran). Similar establishments on a smaller scale were maintained by the provincial prince-governors. On the outbreak of war the shah would assemble an army by issuing a *farmān* calling on the tribal khans and provincial governors to mobilize both their own men and other recruits levied specifically for the campaign. Such an army would be assembled in the spring and would generally be disbanded on the approach of winter, the men joining the colors for one campaign only and then returning to their homes and families. The irregular cavalry was drawn mainly from the nomadic tribes, while footsoldiers, who were apparently greatly despised, were drawn from the rural population taken indiscriminately. The inhabitants of the towns never took up arms unless under imminent danger. Enlisted men usually reached the place of assembly, designated by the royal *farmān*, within a relatively short space of time while those who failed to answer the call quickly were severely punished. In 1796, for example, forty men, who had refused to join the army, had their eyes put out.

In the early Qajar period the commander-in-chief of an army was known as

the *sardār*, and the khan or chief of a tribal contingent as *solṭān*.Chiefs of tribes or provincial governors might act, when appointed by the shah, as generals of divisions. Other officers were commanders of 1,000 (*min-bāši*), 500 (*pānṣad-bāši*), 100 (*yuz-bāši*), 50 (*panjāh-bāši*) and 10 (*dah-bāši*) men. The principal arms of these troops were bows and arrows, clubs, lances, swords and daggers. Although they were acquainted with firearms and carried them, they seem not to have made much use of them.The early Qajar army possessed artillery in the form of falconet-sized swivel guns. The *zanburak* carried a ball of a pound weight, and was mounted on a swivel on a camel's pack-saddle (Eskandari-Qajar).

As campaigns were undertaken only during the summer, the troops marched mainly at night, with torches and music. Their marches averaged six farsangs (sing. *farsang*, *farsaḵ*) per day, but in exceptional circumstances they were able to double that distance. In 1795 Āḡā Moḥammad Khan marched with his cavalry from Tehran to Tbilisi in fifteen days, or about eleven farsangs per day.

When on the march, the troops lived almost entirely at the expense of the inhabitants of the districts through which they traveled. The army intendants gave receipts for the supplies which the troops took, and the value of the supplies was supposed to be deducted from the revenues due from the local population, but the reduction was rarely made, and the districts suffered almost as if they had been occupied by an enemy force. The sudden demands of a large number of troops for food, forage, and transport threatened a rural population surviving on subsistence agriculture with a scarcity which might reach famine levels.The early Qajar shahs appear to have been well aware of the hardships caused by the passage of their armies and once, in 1805, Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah ordered that the districts crossed by his troops should be exempted from all taxes and revenues that year.

The troops fought simply for their pay and plunder, the principal object in an engagement being not to win the battle in any decisive sense, but to gain as much loot as possible.Campaigns were conducted on the lines of tribal raids, the troops neither capable of nor interested in sustaining a prolonged attack on their own, or resisting that of the enemy.Nevertheless military forces thus composed appear to have been reasonably effective within certain traditional limits.Tancoigne (pp. 245-49), a member of the first French military mission (see FRANCE iii. Relations with Persia 1789-1918), expressed a view universal among European observers, when he described the great strength of the Qajar

army as consisting in its cavalry.According to Tancoigne the irregular cavalry, although it did not know how to fight in an orderly fashion and could not withstand a regular cavalry charge or destroy regular infantry, was excellent for turning the flanks of an army and for skirmishing.He considered the footsoldiers, by contrast, to be the most miserable species of troops that could be imagined and dismissed completely the *zanburak* as a serious military force, commenting that in a battle such artillery must be more destructive to the cannoniers than to the enemy.

In the late 18th century Āḡā Moḥammad Khan, with the military forces he was able to muster, successfully established Qajar rule throughout Iran and temporarily drove the forces of the advancing Russian empire back beyond Tbilisi, reasserting Iranian supremacy over the kingdom of Georgia (cf. Atkin, 99-122).On his accession in 1797 Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah was also able to command sufficient military strength to defeat his internal rivals and secure his position as shah. However in 1803 Russia invaded and annexed Georgia, considered by Iran a vassal state, and continued to push southwards. Russia's inexorable pressure forced Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah and especially the crown prince and governor of Azarbaijan, ʿAbbās Mirzā (1789-1833), to embark on a major military reorganization in the hope of increasing Iran's defensive capacity (Pakravan).

ii. Early Qajar military reform.

In the early 19th century the province of Azarbaijan constituted the front line against Russian expansion, and was the focus of Iran's military efforts.Russia's military successes had forced ʿAbbās Mirzā to the conclusion that Iran could only defend its territory against a European enemy, recover possessions already lost and maintain greater internal security by imitating European military organization.James Morier (1818, p. 211) quoted him as saying that he believed it was in vain to fight the Russians without soldiers like theirs, and that their artillery could only be opposed by artillery. A similar conclusion had already been reached in the Ottoman Empire.ʿAbbās Mirzā, consciously modelling himself on his contemporary, the reform-oriented Ottoman sultan Selim III (r. 1789-1809), began in Azarbaijan with the construction of his own version of the reformed Ottoman army (*neẓām-e jadid*).He imported first French, then British instructors, sent students abroad, tried to form disciplined infantry and artillery and introduced a regularized, though rudimentary, system of conscription (*boniča-ye sarbāz*), and established foundries to produce arms. ʿAbbās Mirzā's initiative was the first of the attempts, which peppered 19th and early 20th century Iran, to set up a standing army on the

European model with the help of missions of foreign officers (Cronin, 2007).

Even before ʿAbbās Mirzā's arrival in Tabriz, a number of Russian deserters and renegades who had taken refuge there had brought with them ideas of European tactics. The then-governor had made them officers and with his encouragement they formed and drilled a few battalions. ʿAbbās Mirzā also initially made use of a renegade Russian to teach drilling, but his initial efforts encountered great hostility from both the troops and the general population who disliked any imitation of European, and particularly Russian, methods.He was obliged to arrange for the troops and their Russian instructor to use a private courtyard so they would not be exposed to public ridicule. In order to overcome opposition to European methods, the prince himself adopted military uniform and took instruction in drilling from a Russian, ordering his nobles to follow his example and learn to handle a musket. ʿAbbās Mirzā succeeded in teaching a few of his men to march and drill but, until the arrival of the first French military mission, he lacked officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) for the further development of his plans for reorganization along European lines (Morier, 1818, pp. 211-12). Meanwhile in Tehran the monarch, Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah, established a rudimentary bureaucracy to assist with military administration, headed by a minister of the army (Fasāʾi, pp. 117-18).

(1) *The first French mission*.In 1807 the first French mission under General Claude Matthieu de Gardane (1766-1818) arrived in Iran, beginning an extraordinary procession of European military missions to Qajar Iran. Gardane, with a staff of commissioned and noncommissioned officers, arrived in Tehran in December 1807 under the terms of the Treaty of Finkenstein (4 May 1807) by which Iran had entered into an alliance with Napoleonic France against Britain and Russia. Gardane was to organize the shah's forces along European lines as part of a comprehensive diplomatic and military agreement between Iran and France (Gardane, 1809; Gardane, 1865; cf. Amini, pp. 104-116). By the terms of the treaty, France guaranteed Iran's territorial integrity, supported Iran's claim to Georgia, and promised to supply Iran with arms, officers and artificers, while Iran committed itself to severing relations with and declaring war on Britain, and promising free passage to a French expedition to India.On their arrival at Tehran General Gardane and several other officers were addressed as "khan" and received Iranian military decorations.Captains Fabvier and Reboul were sent to Isfahan to build a cannon foundry, while Captains Verdier and Lamy, supported by three NCOs and an interpreter, were sent to ʿAbbās Mirzā in Tabriz as military instructors.

Other officers began traveling through the country with the objective of gathering intelligence and surveying the districts and routes for a French march on India.

The French officers were at Tabriz for about 14 months.During that time Verdier equipped and trained three regiments of infantry, between 4,000 and 6,000 men.Thesesoldiers (sing. *sarbāz*) were armed with muskets made in Tabriz on the French model, and clothed in uniforms also on the French model but including a typical Persian black sheepskin hat (*telpek*; see CLOTHING xxvi. clothing and jewelry of the Turkmen). Captain Lamy directed the construction of barracks, an arsenal, a powder mill, cannon foundry and fortifications, and also formed a kind of polytechnic school in the camp for training officer-engineers, ʿAbbās Mirzā himself being one of the students.Work was begun on organizing the artillery, which was commanded by Ṭahmurat Khan, a Christian nobleman of the family of the last prince of Georgia. ʿAbbās Mirzā also still had in his camp many Russian deserters, now formed into a unit of their own (Kibovskii), and they were also put under the orders of Captain Verdier (Tancoigne, pp. 314-17). Alongside these modern units, the prince also possessed 22,000 cavalry and 12,000 unreformed footsoldiers.

However the French mission was short-lived.Little more than two months after the conclusion of the Treaty of Finkenstein, European alignments were reversed when Napoleon and the tsar signed the Treaty of Tilsit (7 and 9 July 1807), and French influence in Iran began to wane. Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah, aware of the changing European context, agreed to receive a British mission (see GREAT BRITAIN iii. British influence in Persia in the 19th century), a move specifically forbidden under the treaty of Finkenstein, and Gardane had no choice but to protest and leave. His mission had been hampered by the difficulties of communicating with his superiors in France, and undermined by opposition from both the British and a number of high-ranking Iranian officials in Tabriz, Tehran, and Isfahan.

(2) *The first British mission*. The arrival of the Gardane mission had galvanized the British, both in London and in Calcutta, to send missions of their own, and their efforts to displace the French were successful. The Preliminary Treaty of Friendship and Alliance (17 June 1809) provided for a British subsidy to pay for British military stores, equipment and officers and men, in exchange for the shah's severing his ties with the French.British military assistance in return for Iranian political and diplomatic compliance was confirmed in two

subsequent treaties in 1812 and 1814. Between 1810 and 1813 members of a British military mission, comprising officers, NCOs, and men, arrived in Iran from both India and Britain. By 1813 the mission numbered over fifty, and included, in addition to the British officers and men, a number of Indian sepoys (Anglo-Indian, cf. Pers. sing. *sepāhi*) who were to assist with the training of the Iranian troops (Wright, p. 50).

In Tabriz the British mission continued the work, begun by the French, of raising and drilling troops. British muskets and sabres replaced equipment supplied earlier by the French, and an attempt was made to modify uniforms to resemble a nominally British style. In reality, however, the only European element of the uniform was the jacket introduced by the French. Other than this, uniform remained essentially similar to local Iranian costume, including wide trousers or pantaloons and the sheepskin hat.Officers apparently continued to regard their uniform as simply another version of formal dress. Although the British preserved the right to wear beards to officers and obliged the ordinary soldiers to shave, the ordinary soldiers preserved their customary way of wearing a shaved head with a top-knot and side-curls (Kibovskii and Yegorov).

Despite the efforts of the British mission, ʿAbbās Mirzā's attempt to exploit Russian weakness during Napoleon's invasion of 1812 and to regain the lost territory of Georgia was a failure.Four British officers and 12 NCOs actually accompanied the Iranian troops into battle and, although the Iranians snatched one victory when they routed a Russian force near the Aras (Araxes) river in February 1812, the campaign ended in complete defeat at the battle of Āṣlānduz on 31 October 1812 during which one British officer, Charles Christie, was killed.

The termination of the war between Iran and Russia by the Golestān Treaty (October 1813) was followed by a third agreement, the 1814 Anglo-Persian Treaty. This treaty reaffirmed the principles of earlier agreements, again promising military assistance and money in the event of war with a European power in return for Iran forbidding passage to any European force attacking India. However, the alliance formed between Britain and Russia in 1812-13 caused the British government's commitment to Iran to weaken and it began to run down the British military mission, quibbling over the subsidy and paying less attention to the delivery of supplies. ʿAbbās Mirzā's suggestion that some of his officers be sent to India for training was rejected. The defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815 caused a further British loss of interest in Iran.

By the end of 1815 most of the British mission had been withdrawn, although a small group of officers and NCOs had been allowed to stay on the condition that they did not participate in operations against countries with whom Britain was at peace. The remaining British officers gradually left the Iranian service after 1819, with only Captain Isaac Hart staying behind as commander of ʿAbbās Mirzā's bodyguard.

Meanwhile a certain amount of scepticism was already expressed by contemporary opinion, including the officers of the military missions themselves, regarding the extent to which Iran was really benefiting from these experiments with European models and the employment of European officers. To European observers, Iran's military strength had always resided in its irregular cavalry, furnished by the tribal khans, which had proved itself so effective in lightning raids and defensive skirmishing, while the nezam (*neẓām*) troops inspired little confidence. The remarks of a Russian staff officer, Captain N. N. Muraviev, are typical.In 1817 he declared that "This unfortunate infantry, of which they speak in Europe with respect, was invented for our own benefit. After losing their Asian agility and quickness, the sarbaz have not however acquired European characteristics and are a base and dirty force, badly dressed and created as victims for our grenadiers. They cannot even handle the English muskets which they have been given" (Kibovskii and Yegorov; cf. Malcolm, pp. 359-61; Rawlinson, pp. 30-31). Nonetheless, contrary opinions were also sometimes expressed and some observers commented on the qualities of obedience, willingness, and endurance often manifested by the *sarbāz* (Watson, p. 24; Wills, pp. 177-82).

Nonetheless the Iranian forces led by ʿAbbās Mirzā acquitted themselves well in campaigns against the Ottoman empire in 1821-23, routing the Ottoman army at the battle of Erzurum in 1821. This war demonstrated that the Iranian army, if not equal to the technologically advanced armies of the imperial powers, was strong enough to withstand and even overcome the army of its Middle Eastern neighbor. However a second war with Russia in 1826 ended in another disastrous defeat, with the Russians actually entering Tabriz in November 1827, and was concluded with the Treaty of Turkmanchay (21 February 1828; cf. Williamson).

Since the departure of the British no new military missions had arrived in Iran, yet ʿAbbās Mirzā had continued to engage European officers on an individual basis.The end of the Napoleonic wars had left many officers without employment or career prospects in Europe, and many traveled far

afield in search of positions (Grey; cf. Lafont). A number of such officers of various nationalities (e.g., French, Italian, Spanish), duly arrived in Iran and found employment both with ʿAbbās Mirzā and with Moḥammad ʿAli Mirzā, the prince-governor of Kermanshah. By the early 1830s the nezam forces of Azarbaijan consisted of about 12,000 infantry, 1,200 horse artillery, and one regiment of lancers, recruited under the *boniča* system. They were divided into 10 Iranian and 2 Russian regiments.The Russian regiments were composed of deserters, mainly from the Russian army in Georgia. They were commanded by a former NCO from Nizhni Novgorod, now promoted to general (*sartip*), Samson Yakovlevich Makintsev, known as Samson Khan. The deserter units, known as *bahādorān* (*bahādor*), were well-paid soldiers who fought so well for their new masters that the shah placed particular trust in them when facing internal rebellion or religious disaffection (Conolly, I, pp. 155, 214; Stuart, pp. 173, 187; cf. Andreeva, Cronin, forthcoming).

(3) *The second British mission*. ʿAbbās Mirzā had continued his search for foreign officers and made renewed appeals to Britain. London and especially Calcutta now harbored a growing concern over a possible Russian threat to India and its own loss of influence at Tehran and accordingly a second British military mission, recruited in India, reached Bušehr at the end of 1833.

The military mission's first and immediate task was to ensure the smooth succession of a new shah after the death of ʿAbbās Mirzā in October 1833 and that of Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah in October 1834. Members of the British mission were dispersed across the country, and began raising and drilling troops.

But despite their role in installing the new shah, the presence of the British officers caused resentment among both their Iranian colleagues and the Iranian government (Stuart, pp. 190-94, 238, 300). They were deeply resented by their Iranian colleagues who obstructed their work and they received little support from the Iranian government.There was constant friction over the functions and responsibilities of the British whom the Iranians insisted on regarding only as instructors. They were refused any control over pay, rations and promotions, while Iranian officers hated their interference and frequently disregarded their advice altogether. The British mission suffered further from intrigues both by military officers of other nationalities in the shah's service and by the diplomatic representatives of other countries. In 1836 Moḥammad Shah, increasingly inclining towards Russia, unceremoniously dismissed all the British officers from his summer camp.This second British experiment, even less successful than the first, finally collapsed completely after the

political and diplomatic rupture occasioned by Moḥammad Shah's attack on Herat in 1837 (see HERAT VI. THE HERAT QUESTION). In 1838 Britain, breaking off relations with Iran, ordered all its officers in the shah's service to quit the country.

(4) *The second French mission*. Despite his experience with the British mission, Moḥammad Shah continued to seek foreign assistance for his military reform. Since relations with Britain were still strained and Russia was too distrusted to be allowed the education and command of the army, the shah turned to France. The French agreed to supply Persia with weapons and army instructors to replace the British and in September 1839 a mission led by Edouard de Sercey left Paris to reach Tabriz in January 1840. This mission remained in Iran less than four years, accomplishing little. It was opposed by both Britain and Russia, while it encountered mostly indifference from the Iranian government.The shah made no effort to ensure that the officers received their pay, and seemed ultimately not interested in retaining the mission at all.

For the last 10 years of Moḥammad Shah's reign, the army was left in the charge of the chief minister, Ḥāji Mirzā Āqāsi (ca. 1783-1848), who developed his own plans for military reform. Most of his energy was spent on reviving the camel-mounted artillery (for the *zanburak*, see above), in which he was assisted by an officer of Piedmontanese origin, Colonel Colombari, and on reorganizing the production of weapons at the Tehran arsenal.

iii. Military reform under Nāṣer-al-Din Shah.

(1) *Amir-e Kabir*. A new phase opened in 1848 with the accession of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah (r. 1848-96). With the help of his new chief minister, Mirzā Taqi Khan Amir-e Kabir (1807-52; q.v.), the new shah was able to muster sufficient military strength to suppress a number of provincial rebellions and the Babi revolt (Babism). Amir-e Kabir immediately launched a comprehensive reform program which included measures aimed at modernizing the army. He established the Dar-al-Fonun as an elite military and technical college, and developed the *boniča* system of recruitment, as devised by ʿAbbās Mirzā, into a more complex measure.He reorganized the existing nezam regiments, and ordered the formation of 16 new regiments, one of which was formed by Christians from Urmia and Salmas around some officers and men from the old regiment of Russian deserters. All regiments were properly named, numbered, and divided into divisions (*tumān*) of 10 regiments each.Arsenals were opened

in Isfahan and Mashad to complement the Tehran arsenal and to produce muskets, ammunition, uniforms, swords bugles, bayonets and artillery fuses. Amir-e Kabir also proposed other reforms, although these were to little effect, remaining largely on paper.The attempt to institute a regular cavalry troop by forming a regiment of 750 Shahsevan horsemen proved short-lived.The system by which troops on the march obtained supplies from villages against drafts on the treasury was formally abolished so that all supplies were to be paid for in cash, yet on the ground the old system continued as before. Fortunato Casolani (1819-52), who was from a British family in Malta, became the surgeon-general of the army and only those who passed his examination were to be engaged as regimental surgeons, though this entry exam made little practical difference.

Amir-e Kabir turned to Europe to find further assistance for his reform efforts, especially regarding instruction at the Dar al-Fonun, and political considerations determined his choice of a nation. Placing little trust in either the British, the French or the Russians, Amir-e Kabir approached the Habsburg Empire (Austria) for help, since he was aware of the Austrian victories over Sardinia in 1848-49. In November 1851 an Austrian mission reached Tehran but Amir-e Kabir had fallen from power 11 days before its arrival.

(2) *The Austrian mission*.The new chief minister Mirzā Āqā Khan Nuri (in office 1852-58) was unsympathetic to the reforms of his predecessor and to the engagement of more Europeans.On their arrival in Tehran the Austrians, who had initially been led to expect that they would be received with open arms, immediately began to encounter difficulties. Their position was weak because the mission's members had entered into private contracts with the Qajar authorities and therefore could not appeal directly to their own government for support. Furthermore the Habsburg Empire had no diplomatic representative who might offer them protection in Tehran. Nonetheless, at the beginning of 1852 the mission began their work at the Dar al-Fonun where its scientific members taught medicine, chemistry, minerology and mining while the military members exercised recruits in the parade ground and expounded the theory of war and tactics to officers (for details of the Austrian mission, see the ethnographic study of Iran, published by the group's physician J. E. Polak (1818-92)).

The situation of the Austrian mission in Tehran was further compromised by the arrival of a group of Italian officers (see ITALY ii. Diplomatic and commercial relations). In 1850 a number of refugees from various Italian

states, who had taken an active part in the revolutionary movements of 1848-49 and were living in poor circumstances in Istanbul, had petitioned the British envoy in Tehran to recommend them as military instructors to the Iranian government. Various posts were arranged and six of these refugees, calling themselves the Mission of Italian Volunteers, arrived in Tehran in the early part of 1852, shortly after the Austrians had been appointed instructors of the infantry. Since the failed Italian revolutions of 1848-49 had aimed at ending the Habsburg domination of the Italian peninsula, relations between the Austrian and Italian officers were from the beginning extremely bad.Quarrels and intrigues were endemic, and the Italians often got the better of the Austrians as they were able to benefit from the protection of the British legation. The Austrian officers, frustrated in their efforts, began to leave, and by 1853 the Italians had acquired sole charge of the infantry, while leaving the artillery and the cavalry to the Austrians. The Austrian mission, hampered at every turn, made almost no progress, yet the impact of the Italians, who themselves had very little military experience with short periods of service in revolutionary corps of volunteers, was equally insignificant. Nonetheless, in October 1856 the successful attack on Herat showed that Iran could still, without great difficulty put a considerable number "of good fighting men, fairly well-armed and equipped but badly-officered" into the field (Picot, p. 73).

(3) *The third French mission*.After the collapse of the attack on Herat under British military and diplomatic pressure, the shah again began to toy with the idea of western-style reforms and again sought military advisers from Europe. There were by now only three of the Italian instructors left, and the two remaining Austrians wished to retire, so the shah decided to try to obtain more instructors from Europe. Neither the Italians nor the Austrians had been a success, relations with Britain had been soured by the Herat war, and Russia was still considered more a source of danger than assistance, so the shah again applied to France. The French government, keen to foster friendly relations, at once acceded to the shah's request and a third French mission arrived in October 1858. This mission was led by Victor Brongniart, and all its members were professional soldiers who had served in Algiers.On arrival all were immediately enrolled in the Iranian army. Although these soldiers were also hired to teach at the Dar al-Fonun, the essential purpose of the mission, like that of its predecessors, was to raise and train troops.

The French mission lasted three years and finally quit the country without any

real accomplishments, though some progress was made under the French superintendent at the arsenal. Control of the infantry had remained with the Italians, with whom the French officers had clashed repeatedly, and in any case the Treasury was empty after the Herat war. The shah, despairing at these failures and shocked by the defeat suffered by an Iranian army of more than 20,000 men which had advanced on Marv in the autumn of 1860 in order to quell the Turkmans and assert Iranian sovereignty, again turned to Britain for assistance. Britain, however, declined the shah's request.In 1870 the request was renewed but again declined.

After the departure of the third French mission, three Italians remained the principal European military advisers to the shah. All three rose to the rank of general, and one, Enrico Andreini, who had been a lieutenant of the Tuscan volunteers in 1848, became instructor-in-chief and remained in service until his death in 1894 (Piemontese, 1969; 1975). During these years there was also a miscellany of foreign adventurers and mercenaries, such as Isidore Borowsky (ca. 1770-ca. 1838) and Joseph Philippe Ferrier (1811-86) in military service in Iran (Etteḥādiya and Ṣādeq).

(4) *Mirzā Ḥosayn Khan*. The next major effort at military reorganization, as in Amir-e Kabir's time in deliberate imitation of the Ottoman reforms (turk. *tanẓimāt*) and again with the help of foreign military missions, was in the 1870s launched by the chief minister and minister of war, Mošir-al-Dawla Mirzā Ḥosayn Khan (d. 1881). He had been ambassador in Istanbul after 1856, and now he drew up extensive plans for the reorganization of the army, including measures to regulate the army budget, reform conscription, and improve military education (Nashat, pp. 55-71).

Like his predecessors, Mošir-al-Dawla turned to Europe for military assistance. Apparently the shah had been deeply impressed, during his first trip to Europe in 1873, by the military spectacles performed before him and during that trip he made a request to the German government for the loan of officers. During his second European journey in 1878 the shah asked the Habsburg emperor and the Russian tsar for the loan of instructors. In January 1879 the second Austrian mission, headed by Adalbert von Schönowsky (1826-91), duly arrived in Tehran. The Habsburg Empire also supplied some Euchatius guns, several thousands of Werndl rifles and a great quantity of ammunition.Very soon after the arrival of the Austrians the first Russian mission came to Iran under A. I. Domantovich and began the organization of an Iranian Cossack Brigade.

Although on their arrival in Tehran the Austrian officers were unpleasantly surprised to find that the charge of the cavalry had been given to Russians, nonetheless the mission began its work. It recruited about 5,000 men in western Iran and formed them into seven regiments and one battery of field artillery, with six Euchatius guns, this force becoming known as the Austrian corps. At first the Austrian officers received ample funds and in a comparatively short space of time had their regiments well-organized, all the troops in full uniform on the Austrian pattern, armed with Werndl rifles, and housed in good barracks. But before long the Austrian mission began to attract intrigues from the pro-Russian faction at court which was eager to promote the Russian military mission, funds began to be irregularly supplied or not paid at all, and the corps began to disintegrate. As well as being extremely expensive, the Austrian corps attracted much jealousy from officers in older military units.There was also friction among the Austrian officers themselves, and the Austrian corps gradually fell to pieces. Nonetheless, between 1880 and 1881, the Austrian corps, together with other troops, was sent to Azarbaijan to quell the Kurdish revolts.But after the end of their contracts, the Austrian officers were not retained, and all, with the exception of the band master, left Iran at the end of 1881. Soon thereafter the Austrian corps broke up completely, its men being drafted into other regiments while many of its officers figured for years on the Army List without actually being in service.

After the establishment of the Russian mission with the Cossack Brigade, the numbers of officers of different nationalities coming to Iran in search of employment declined rapidly.By the end of the century only two European instructors were still with the army: the Austrian general Carl Walther Wagner von Wetterstädt (1838-1902), known as Wagner Khan (q.v.), and the Italian general Maletta, while two German officers taught at the Dar al-Fonun which had been reorganized on the German model in 1882.

iv. Nezam infantry and artillery, the irregular cavalry.

On paper, the numbers of nezam troops had risen inexorably throughout the 19th century, each reform wave leading to the raising of more regiments.While the French mission was at Tabriz in 1808 ʿAbbās Mirzā possessed between 4,000 and 6,000 nezam troops. By the late 1830s the infantry alone had risen to 50 regiments comprising 54,850 officers and men.By 1900 the nezam infantry officially numbered 78,500 men, divided into 80 regiments. The regulation strength of a regiment, in theory, ranged from 800 to 1,000 men, with 38 officers. In reality, however, most of these troops

were either absent from their regiments or entirely fictitious, the muster rolls having been falsified so that the pay of the imaginary soldiers might be retained by senior officers.Nonetheless, "given time and a fairly liberal expenditure of money," commanding officers seemed able, by rough and ready methods, to raise regiments to something approaching full strength (Picot, p. 105). Yet money was in ever shorter supply, the Iranian government was falling into debt, and in any case troops so raised were completely lacking in training and discipline.

The relentless 19th-century rise in paper regiments constituted an enormous drain on the resources.Whatever the situation on the ground, the authorities invariably met in full the cost of pay for the complement of officers and men stipulated on the muster rolls, for their uniforms, weapons, and so on. This served to introduce a new method of redistributing resources among the elite. In fact, the possibility of acquiring an appointment in one of the nezam regiments, with their fixed and unfailingly honoured budgets, had opened up a novel and extremely profitable avenue of investment. Commands were bought and sold at high prices, frequently purely as an investment by civilians. So lucrative was command of a nezam regiment that tribal chiefs often tried to acquire such a position rather than retaining their irregular cavalry. Having bought his regiment, the colonel was then able to recoup his investment and make a profit in a number of ways, by retaining the wages of soldiers who were on the official strength but not actually maintained, by selling commissions to his subordinate officers and exemptions from service and discharges to the private soldier, and by profiteering out of rations and pay (for a discussion of the prevailing attitudes towards office-holding, see Sheikholeslami).

The majority of infantry troops were of Turkish-speaking origin, with 26 regiments of Azeris from Azarbaijan and 16 regiments of Turkish-speaking recruits drafted in other provinces. Kurds and Lurs provided 8, and Persians the remaining 30 regiments (Picot, p. 112).

In theory, the drill and tactics of the infantry regiments were based upon the Austrian system, a legacy of the Austrian mission of 1878-81. But the troops' only real training, under the supervision of Iranian officers, themselves trained by the Austrian mission, was in simple parade ground manouvres, enabling them to take part in a march past before the shah.

The Austrian Werndl rifle was the regulation arm of the infantry.About 70,000

of these weapons had been purchased at various times by the Qajar representative in Vienna, but during Naṣer-al-Din Shah's reign most of the troops in Tehran were actually armed with old percussion guns.The Werndl rifles were stored in the magazines and only issued to specially selected regiments preparatory to a review by the shah. General Wagner, however, believed that that many Werndl rifles had been sold to the tribes. In general, the tribes themselves, especially in the south, were much better armed than the nezam troops, and possessed a large number of modern rifles.

Infantry barracks were provided at Tehran.They were inadequate, but, in any case, many of the men gained a daily living in the bazaars (*bāzār*) and preferred to live near their work.A similar situation prevailed in the chief garrison towns.

The 19th-century reform efforts had focused particularly on the infantry and the artillery (Watson, p. 24). Under ʿAbbās Mirzā the French and the British had reorganized the horse and mule-driven artillery units which constituted the core of his reformed nezam troops. By the end of the 19th century, the artillery had a nominal strength of 11,319 men and an effective strength of 5,820 men. The annual budget made allowance for 4,000 horses and the government paid for the full budgeted establishment whatever the number of horses actually maintained, probably less than 1,000. Azarbaijan was the historical recruiting ground for the artillery, but the artillery also drew on a version of the *boniča* system, applied to tribes rather than to villages. Service in the artillery was more popular than in the infantry, and apparently the authorities experienced little difficulty in enlisting men. The artillery was armed with second-hand Euchatius guns purchased in Austria, and General Wagner was the chief instructor, though the Austrian-style training remained elementary. The first British and French missions had abolished the camel-mounted artillery (*zamburak*) as battle-field units, and so they became a ceremonial corps which at the end of the 19th century still appeared at reviews before the shah.

In operational terms, the irregular cavalry was still the most effective fighting element in Iran's military forces. It had remained untouched by the European military missions and government efforts at reform. It continued to be organized exclusively on a tribal basis, the men serving under their own chiefs, and supplying their own horses and weapons. In return for keeping a specified complement of men available for service, the khans received payment in the form of a tax deduction, a dispensation of great financial value

and which also symbolically diminished their acknowledgement of the central government's authority. The chiefs frequently deducted from the revenues a sum larger than the regulation grant, the excess depending on the strength or weakness of the provincial governors. Furthermore, as with other branches of the military, whatever the discrepancy between the nominal and actual strength of the levies, the government invariably accepted the costs specified on the nominal official list. The men usually received a horse or a rifle, or the remission of some tribal tax, in return for their liability for service. When embodied for service, the irregular cavalry also received pay in the form of ration (*jira*) and horse (*ʿaliq*) allowances.Large numbers of the tribal cavalry possessed the government Werndl rifles which were sold to them by regular officers.

The irregular cavalry was divided into regiments or squadrons of varying strength, which were known by their places of recruitment or by that of their tribe. The levies were drawn principally from Khorasan, Azarbaijan, Fārs, and the districts of the Baḵtiāri tribe. The internal organization of the regiments was based upon the old Turco-Mongolsystem of divisions of tens, fifties and hundreds. On mobilization, the cavalry possessed an estimated potential strength of 37,591 men (Picot, p. 118).

In general, tribal cavalry were only mobilized for specific operations, though some tribal cavalry were employed as roadguards, but served only in their own districts.Service elsewhere was extremely unpopular and only imposed in an emergency.Accustomed from childhood to handling arms, these tribal horsemen were "usually pretty fair shots at short range, and were capable of offering considerable resistance in their own territory" (Tousi, p. 217). Although of some effectiveness in campaigns against their tribal enemies and as a threat to subdue urban populations, the use of the irregular cavalry was fraught with difficulties.They were usually mobilized only for specific operations and rarely agreed to serve outside their own districts. They were motivated entirely by the prospect of plunder and when on campaign were often themselves the cause of serious disorder.

In the latter part of the century a few tribal cavalry regiments from northern Iran were employed in garrison at Tehran, and more formally organized on the cossack model. Iranian officers detached from the Cossack Brigade trained the Tehran regiments, and Iranian cossack officers were also sent to Isfahan, Mashad, and Bojnurd to reorganize and train their irregular cavalry regiments.There was, however, no such extension of cossack influence to the

tribal cavalry of southern Iran.

The shah's personal bodyguard was drawn from the tribal cavalry regiments that were headquartered in Tehran.These troops were often of some social standing, and received special pay and allowances.But of a nominal strength of 2,500 men, probably only about 500 were actually serving as men-at-arms.

Great attention had been paid during the 19th century to designing an appropriate uniform for officers and men of the nezam regiments.Different colors had been allotted to different branches of the Qajar army, often depending on the tradition of the particular foreign officers who were employed in these branches.By 1900 the infantry wore red, the artillery blue and the cavalry green. The official uniform consisted of, in the appropriate color: cap (*kolāh*), tunic, pantaloons, boots or shoes, and sometimes a greatcoat (see CLOTHING x. in the qajar and safavid periods). However, in practice most of the money supplied for uniforms was pocketed by senior officers and officials, and clothing was very irregularly supplied and usually made of poor-quality material. Typically, within a month of his arrival in garrison, the recruit's uniform was in rags.

v. Recruitment.

Prior to ʿAbbās Mirzā's reforms, men were enlisted for specific military campaigns and paid only so long as with the colors. The introduction of a standing army based on his *boniča* system represented an enormous increase in state expenditure, and this rudimentary form of conscription became a cross which the Iranian Treasury was forced to bear. Yet, although its financial impact was considerable, in practice, the new method of recruitment differed little from the old. The *boniča* system clearly defined liability for military service on the basis of a calculation of the number of plows required to keep village land under cultivation, one man per plow deemed liable.The authorities, however, totally lacking in modern administrative and bureaucratic resources, especially a census, fixed the responsibility for enforcing the system onto the village, not the individual. Thus the selection of recruits was actually made by the village elders and local landowners as the need arose and as they saw fit, much as it had been done prior to the reform (Picot, p. 97). The *boniča* system was never enforced systematically, and soldiers continued to be taken from traditional recruiting grounds, especially Azarbayjan. But even in Azarbayjan the application of the system became increasingly haphazard as the century progressed, because the original tax

assessment according to which liability was assessed remained unrevised and became increasingly anomalous. The *boniča* system failed to provide the authorities with a predictable supply of trained manpower, nor did it succeed in overcoming tribal and clan-based recruiting. Some nezam regiments were composed entirely of recruits from the same tribe, and there was a preponderance of the Turkish element.

The *boniča* system was intensely unpopular with the peasantry. It led to the recruitment of the "village failures" while providing ample opportunity for bribery and corruption (Picot, pp. 95-98).Service in the nezam infantry and artillery was nominally for life, but a soldier might always return to civilian life, if he could scrape together enough cash to buy a discharge from his colonel or to persuade another man to serve as his substitute.

vi. Pay.

The introduction by ʿAbbās Mirzā of a system of fixed rates of pay had also led to a catastrophic deterioration in the conditions endured by the nezam troops. Prior to this reform, terms of service had been negotiated individually and on an *ad hoc* basis, and therefore roughly reflected the cost of living and the market value of labor. In 1810, Abbas Mirzā laid down fixed rates of pay for officers and men, these rates remaining more or less unchanged throughout the century. But in 1810 a private soldier's pay, in silver coin (*tumān)*, was sufficient for buying food to keep a family for a month.During the course of the century the *tumān* consistently depreciated until its purchasing power had decreased by about 80 per cent (Avery and Simmons). By 1900 both officers and men were actually receiving only one-fifth of the pay which ʿAbbās Mirzā's original scheme intended they should have. Not only was pay worth in real terms about one-fifth of its original value, but even this pittance often remained unpaid for months or even years (Watson, p. 24). With much of his pay withheld, and with his daily food alone costing more than his ration allowances, soldiers were allowed, encouraged, and even obliged to find other work as laborers, small shopkeepers, and also often as money-lenders, in this way providing for themselves and, owing to a system of percentages, also for their officers.

The deterioration in the conditions under which the nezam troops lived led not only to garrisons becoming shells, empty while the troops earned their bread in the bazars, but also to more serious breaches of discipline. Although during the 19th century Iran had acquired various formal codes of military

discipline (Report of the Anglo-Persian Military Commission, p. 20), in practice commanders punished their men entirely at their own discretion and soldiers guilty of individual transgressions might expect brutal treatment. However, collective disobedience, even mutiny, might occasionally be met with negotiation and concessions from the authorities, who lacked the means to suppress bodies of armed men.When soldiers considered their arrears of pay intolerable as they found themselves unable to make ends meet, they often resorted to individual or mass protests, taking asylum (*bast*) in mosques and elsewhere, sacking food shops, refusing to attend parades, and intimidating senior officers (Thielmann, II, p. 50). The outcome of each protest varied according to circumstance but, although ringleaders were often victimized, the troops were often successful in obtained at least a portion of what they were due (Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, p. 88; cf. Martin, pp. 133-49).

vii. Officers.

Before the reforms of ʿAbbās Mirzā, officers had been known simply by appellations which indicated the number of men under their command (e.g., *min-bāši*, *pānṣad-bāši*, *yuz-bāši*, *panjāh-bāši*, *dah-bāši*), and modern ranks with their hierarchical significance were unknown.For example, a *sarhang* was the commander of a line (*āhang*), while a *sartip* was in charge of a small group of men (*tip*). For his nezam regiments ʿAbbās abolished the old nomenclature and introduced new ranks with titles which were the exact equivalents of European usage: *naib* (lieutenant), *solṭān* (captain), *yāvar* (major), *sarhang* (colonel), *sartip (*general). The strength of a regiment was fixed at 10 companies of 100 men each, with 38 officers under the command of a *sarhang*. A *sartip* commanded 2-4, an *amir-panj* 5, and an *amir-tumān* 10 regiments. A *sartip*, as well as any other officer in command of any large or small expedition, was called a *sardār*. In addition, the title of *amir-nuyān* was used for the commander of an army corps.

During the course of the 19th century, however, this system degenerated. Regulations governing military rank disintegrated and nominal possession of any particular place in the hierarchy ceased to imply any fixed military responsibility or even any connection with the army. The number of officers proliferated, and the army budget paid salaries and pensions to many people who had acquired military rank by patronage or purchase simply in order to benefit financially. The confusion was aggravated by a new habit among the civilian elite, fostered by Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, for wearing military uniform and sporting elaborate military decorations.

By the end of the century neither Iranian reformers nor the European military missions had succeeded in creating a professional officer corps for the nezam regiments. Although Amir-e Kabir had founded the Dar al-Fonun with the intention of educating a professional officer corps, its graduates were hampered in finding employment in the army owing to the opposition of those who had bought their appointments.In general, the authorities made appointments and promotions on the basis of favoritism and purchase (Curzon, p. 604).

Many European observers (e.g., Curzon, p. 604) wrote in extremely scathing terms about the large numbers of faux officers and the low qualifications of those actually serving as officers, and yet contrary opinions were also voiced. Toward the end of the 19th century Lieutenant-Colonel Picot (p. 87, 113) observed that in numerous instances officers, “unfortunately, however, mostly of the lower grades,” had distinguished themselves by the utmost bravery and courage. Picot argued that in particular the Turkish, Kurdish and Lur nezam regiments possessed many competent junior officers.He also considered the tribal officers of the irregular cavalry talented soldiers who carried considerable weight with their men, although they had no formal military training.

viii. The end of the Qajar army.

During the first two decades of the 20th century, schemes were repeatedly advanced for a further reform the nezam troops.But the Qajar government’s escalating financial difficulties made their effective implementation ever more problematic. Eventually a final reorganization of the Central Brigade’s establishment in Tehran was initiated. This force consisted of the nezam regiments raised and stationed around the Qajar capital. By 1919 this force had a strength of 2,142 men and 126 officers.Its commander was Swedish, and a Polish officer was in charge of the NCOs Swedish training and drill. Although the Central Brigade possessed all three arms (that is, infantry, artillery, and cavalry), it continued to suffer from the defects that typified the nezam regiments. Because the Central Brigade was “unequipped, unarmed, unofficered and untrained, it may be said to possess no military value whatever” (Report of the Anglo-Persian Military Commission, p. 12).

During the Constitututional Revolution, the Iranian government had continued its experiments with foreign officers, and appointed in 1910 a Swedish mission to establish and officer a gendarmerie. But with the

beginning of World War I, European military missions were increasingly imposed on a now reluctant Iranian government. In 1916 Britain and Russia enforced through the Sipahsalar Agreement a substantial increase in the number of Russians serving with the Iranian Cossack Brigade, and on the establishment of a new levy corps in the south officered by the British, the South Persia Rifles. British insistence on imposing its officers and Iranian resistance culminated in a protracted political crisis over the Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919. The presence of a British military mission charged with reorganizing, training and officering the Iranian army was one its pivotal element which caused deep resentment and led to its eventual rejection (Bayāt).

The reaction against the Qajar experience with foreign military missions led to a resolute refusal to countenance any further experiments. As one of his first actions after the coup d'état of 1921, Reżā Khan (d. 1944) removed the British officers serving on the Gilān front. Within a few month the South Persia Rifles were disbanded, and by the end of 1921 the Swedish officers serving with the gendarmerie had also been dismissed.In 1922, the gendarmerie and the Cossack Division were united to form a new army, which also absorbed the remaining nezam regiments, and in 1925 a conscription act based on modern nationalist precepts replaced the *boniča* system.

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