



AUSTRIA I. RELATIONS WITH PERSIA

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i. Relations with Persia

Diplomatic and Commercial Relations with Persia. Diplomatic and commercial relations between Austria and Persia have a long history, stretching back to the sixteenth century. At that time Shah Esmā'il I had founded the Safavid dynasty in Persia, while the Hapsburg rulers of Austria were at the same time the German kings and emperors of the Holy Roman Empire (Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation). The Hapsburgs maintained this status until 1806, when Franz II surrendered the crown of the Holy Roman Empire after having crowned himself Austrian Emperor in 1804.

The Safavids and the Hapsburgs had a common enemy — the Ottoman Empire, which was trying to expand both westwards and eastwards. Esmā'il I had already established relations with Venice and the Papal Court, because the Venetians dominated the trade in the Levant and maintained representatives in Tabriz. In 1518, he proposed an alliance against the Turks. However, since the relations he had already established failed to produce a positive result, in October 1523 he sent the monk Petrus de Monte Libano (Maronita) directly to Emperor Karl V of Austria and Ludwig II of Hungary with the same offer (Du Mans, p. I; Palombini, pp. 63-65; Lanz, I, p. 52; Babinger, p. 3; Schuster-Walser,



p. 11). Karl V accepted the offer in principle, not knowing that it had become invalidated with the death of Esmā'il I in 1524 (Lanz, I, pp. 168). In 1526, King Ludwig II of Hungary was killed in a battle against the Turks, and Ferdinand, the brother of Karl V, was elected king of Bohemia and Hungary. From now on the Hapsburgs had to defend the extreme eastern border of the Empire. Therefore they were eagerly looking for allies who could create the desired diversion of the Turks. In 1529, Johann v. Balbi was sent to Shah Tahmāsp I (Palombini, p. 66; Babinger, p. 3; Lanz, I, pp. 292). Karl V informed the Shah that he and his brother Ferdinand would attack the Turks the following year, and asked Tahmāsp to attack from the rear so that together they could overwhelm their common enemy. However, it took Balbi more than a year to reach the Persian Court, during which time the situation had changed completely. The shah had to make peace with the Sultan because the Uzbeks were threatening Persia from the east, so all the endeavors of Balbi failed. The envoys Pietro da Negro and Simon de Lillis, who had been dispatched by King Ferdinand to Persia, could not bring positive news back to Europe either (Neck, pp. 72, 85, 86; Palombini, p. 70; Afshar, p. 21).

In the following years, good relations were maintained with legations being mentioned for the years 1532, 1533 and 1540 (Neck, p. 72), but the domestic problems of the two powers and the long distance between them prevented closer cooperation. For this reason there was no direct trade between Austria and Persia. The relatively poor commercial relations relied on intermediaries. Furthermore, Persia was shaken by turmoil after the death of Tahmāsp I, until Shah 'Abbās I finally managed to consolidate control of the country. Persia then found peace for the first time in many years.

The next contact between Austria and Persia was initiated by Emperor Rudolf II who resided in Prague. He sent a message to Shah 'Abbās via the Persian minister in Moscow in 1593 (Kochwasser, p. 28). By coincidence, the British subjects Anthony and Robert Sherley arrived in Persia in 1598 and met Shah 'Abbās I in Isfahan. Anthony Sherley, a cunning adventurer, successfully curried favor with Shah 'Abbās I (Le Strange, p. 227), who decided to send a legation to the European Courts, and especially to Rudolf II, in order to build an alliance against the Turks (Babinger, p. 5; Schuster-Walser, p. 73; Hinz, p. 408; Kochwasser, p. 29; Gabriel, p. 67). The basic idea was to begin hostilities simultaneously and to agree that none of the allies should make peace with the enemy separately. In 1599, the Persian ambassador Ḥosayn-'Ali Beg, 4 nobles, 5 interpreters and the necessary staff left Isfahan. Anthony Sherley, a



well experienced traveler with a command of several languages, served not only as the guide but also, more or less, as the head of the legation (Du Mans, pp. VI-VIII; Babinger, p. 6 ff.; Le Strange, p. 234; Kochwasser, p. 29; Slaby, p. 12 ff.). The legation was received by Emperor Rudolf II on 7 November 1600. All the members of the legation were deeply impressed by the sumptuousness of the imperial palace on the Hradschin, the courtly splendor of the reception and the affable condescension of the Emperor (Le Strange, pp. 274-78) during their stay of several months in Prague. The formal response to Shah 'Abbās, dated 11 December 1600 (*MHH*, pp. 88-91), was finally handed over, and on 5 February 1601 the legation left Prague to head for Italy, Rome and Spain. It is not known precisely when it arrived back in Persia after having visited several European Courts and the Pope in Rome (Le Strange, p. 9). It can be taken for granted that Ambassador Ḥosayn-'Ali Beg returned disappointed and embittered, because Anthony Sherley had ruined the purpose of the legation by stealing nearly all the gifts for the European rulers (Le Strange, p. 284; Du Mans, p. IX; Babinger, p. 30; Schuster-Walser, p. 49) and amassing debts wherever he went. Furthermore, several of his companions had become Christians and chose not to return to their homeland (Le Strange, p. 9; Babinger, pp. 3, 30).

On 27 August 1602, the Austrian legation under Stephan Kakasch von Zalonkemeny left Prague with the order to confirm the agreement of a mutual assistance treaty (Du Mans, pp. XI; Schuster-Walser, p. 73; Kochwasser, p. 29; Gabriel, pp. 56). No member of the mission survived the journey except Georg Tectander von der Jabel, who met Shah 'Abbās I on 15 November 1603 in Tabriz, which had been captured from the Turks just one week earlier. Tectander handed over the letters of the emperor and stayed for nearly a whole year with the Persian court. In Isfahan, he was graciously dismissed by the shah and, accompanied by the Persian envoy Mahdi Qoli Beg, returned to Prague (Wolkan, pp. 85-92, 117-19; Kochwasser, p. 30; Schuster-Walser, p. 73; Gabriel, p. 57). Prior to his arrival in the autumn of 1605, a second Persian legation under Zaynal Khan Shamlu had reached Prague, and had been received in a similar way as the first one (Kochwasser, p. 30). However, none of these legations and missions produced a decisive result. Due to the distances involved and the duration of the journey, no dates could be fixed for simultaneous action, and then, contrary to all agreements, Emperor Rudolf II made peace with the Turks in 1606 (Schuster-Walser, p. 60). Shah 'Abbās I was deeply disappointed and lost all confidence in this European ally, so Persian relations with the West cooled off significantly. Several other legations, such as



the one under Wratislaw v. Dohna (Gabriel, p. 57; Schuster-Walser, p. 73; Kochwasser, p. 31; Hinz, p. 409) and another Persian mission under 'Ali-Qoli Beg in 1609, did not bring any change. The Hapsburgs now had to deal with grave religious problems within their empire (the rise of Protestantism) and therefore tried to maintain peace with the Turks.

After the end of the “Thirty Years War,” all the European courts ran short of money and tried to increase their income through the means at their disposal: taxes, tolls and tariffs. Therefore every effort was made to improve the administration and to foster trade and export. The time of mercantilism had arrived. In the meantime, the imperial Court had moved from Prague to Vienna. The peace treaty between the Hapsburgs and the Ottoman Empire included favorable terms for trade within and beyond Turkish borders. The merchants had to pay only 3% customs duty (Hassinger, 1942, p. 6). This seemed an opportunity for a wide range of profitable activities, and led, in 1667, to the founding of the first Austrian Oriental Trade Company in Vienna (Hassinger, 1949, pp. 90). The traders used the waterway of the Danube to bring their goods to the Black Sea, whence they sailed to Istanbul and Trabzon. From there the goods could be transported on land to Tabriz, the most important marketplace in Persia at the time. Among the first things imported from Persia in 1668 were cotton veils and silk products (Hassinger, 1942, p. 22). Persian silk and silk threads were especially sought as raw material for silk manufacture. Contacts were made initially by intermediaries, while the first direct contracts were concluded only in 1678 (Hassinger, 1942, p. 50). Unfortunately the last wave of Turkish expansion to the West, culminating in the siege of Vienna in 1683, brought an end to the first Austrian Oriental Trade Company. However, it should be remembered that this company was the very first to make direct commercial contacts with Persia.

At the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century the Hapsburgs were defeating the Turks, enabling an expansion of their empire into parts of Hungary which had previously been part of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the Banat and Transylvania. The peace-treaty of Passarowitz was signed in 1718 (Meyer, XVI, p. 200), and the subsequent trade agreement included a significant stipulation: all imperial subjects could trade freely in the Mediterranean Sea, in the Black Sea, on the Danube and throughout the Ottoman Empire, and protection of trade from and to Persia was guaranteed. This agreement, which became the basis for the future development of commercial ties, reveals Austria's special interest in Persia.



Nonetheless, in the eighteenth century diplomatic and commercial relations between Austria and Persia did not improve. A second Oriental Trade Company had been founded in Vienna in 1719, but after only 25 years it was forced into liquidation. Such was the fate of the Ostende Trade Company, which survived only 9 years, because Karl VI had to make concessions to other states in Europe, especially to France and Britain, in order to secure the succession of his daughter Maria Theresia (Slaby, p. 27). Thus Austria never became a sea power of any significance (Hassinger, 1949, pp. 91; Marschalek, pp. 4-8), although cultural relations with Persia flourished nevertheless, and Vienna becoming the center of research on Persia. Many palaces and major buildings in Vienna even today show the influence of Persian architecture. In 1754, the Oriental Academy was founded in Vienna for the purpose of teaching about the Orient and training interpreters in Turkish, Persian and Arabic. It was through this very institution that knowledge of Persian literature and culture spread widely in Europe during the eighteenth century (Slaby, pp. 31).

The nineteenth century witnessed several changes in geopolitics. In Central Europe the dream of the Holy Roman Empire had come to an end, and the Austrian Empire consisted from now on of only the home kingdoms and provinces of the Hapsburgs. Meanwhile, rivalries between the two great imperial powers, the British and the Russians, were threatening Persian independence. The foothold which the British gained on the Indian subcontinent and their supremacy in the Persian Gulf entirely changed the relationship between the two countries. To the north, Russia expanded continuously southwards and in the first decades of the century a considerable amount of Persian territory was permanently appropriated. As a result of this situation, Persia began to develop diplomatic ties with other European countries, which mostly seemed disinterested, and thus Austria became one of the most attractive countries for Persia in this respect.

In 1810, a Persian legation which had already been to London and Paris passed through Vienna. This mission had no special brief, but was more or less a courtesy-visit to reactivate old ties. In 1818, another legation left Tehran, under Mirzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Khan, for Istanbul, Paris and London, while his nephew Mirzā 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Khan Širāzi was appointed ambassador to Vienna (Busse, pp. 155, 159). Both ambassadors reached Vienna in February 1819. The audience took place on February 8, and the letters of Fath-'Ali Shah were then presented to Emperor Franz I. While Mirzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Khan headed for London, Mirzā 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Khan Širāzi left Vienna on 14 March



1819. This visit was also no more than a courtesy call and an exchange of letters. A very detailed description of this visit has been given by the famous Orientalist Hammer-Purgstall, who had acted as interpreter (HHStA).

Although diplomatic relations failed to develop significantly, commercial ties did improve. The shifting of trade from land to sea routes proved favorable for the Austrian shipping companies. The most important port for traffic from the north to Persia was Trabzon. Austria had two possible ways to reach there. Ships could either start from Trieste and enter the Black Sea via Istanbul, or sail on the Danube to Galatz, where the goods could be reloaded onto bigger steamers for the journey to Trabzon. Thus in 1830, out of 26 ships arriving in Trabzon, 11 were sailing under the Austrian flag, and, in 1833, 15 ships came directly from Trieste (Slaby, p. 48). In this year 2,600 colliers were unloaded with goods to the value of 1,380,000 florins. Most of the goods, consisting mainly of woolens and glassware, were transported to Tabriz on either of two routes: one led from Trabzon via Erzurum to Tabriz, the other, which was shorter, reached Tabriz via Batumi, Tiflis, Yerevan and Julfa (Blau, p. 238; Polak, II, p. 189). In 1837, the Danube Steamship Company (DDSG) started its first regular service with the steamer called “Fernando,” and soon earned the rewards for its perseverance (Issawi, p. 99; Gödel, p. 3). Later on, the line was taken over by the “Austrian Lloyd” (Issawi, p. 93; Kochwasser, p. 51; Stolze, p. 48; Blau, p. 149). Trade increased such that the value of Austrian exports to Persia reached 5,800,000 florins by 1842, while the imports from Persia amounted to 1,600,000 florins. (Figures on the Austrian export to and import from Persia through the Persian Gulf area are not available, as the British dominated the entire traffic.) There were even deliberations in 1845 to establish an Austrian honorary consulate in Tehran, but the Foreign Ministry refused, claiming that the amount of trade was not enough to justify such a measure (HHStA, FA Präs. 10011 ex 1845).

In 1848, by strange coincidence, a young ruler came to the throne in both Austria and Persia: in Persia Nāṣer-al-Din became shah, while in Austria Franz Joseph I became emperor, both at just 18 years old. Each was confronted with disturbances within his own country. In Europe it was the year of revolution, while in Persia religious disturbances broke out due to the Bābi movement. These problems were not so difficult to overcome, but the pressure on Persia due to British and Russian rivalries made matters even worse. Therefore the Grand Vizier Mirzā Taqī Khan Amir Kabir tried to extract his country from this pincer-like embrace by enhancing modernization with the aid of



foreigners. In 1850, the Dār al-fonun was founded as a polytechnic school in Tehran. Amir Kabir sent Jān Dāwud Khan to Vienna to hire teachers and military instructors specifically for this new institution (Issawi, p. 293; Polak, I, pp. 298, 301; Brugsch, I, p. 307), and six Austrians each signed a contract to work there for several years. This first Austrian military mission to Persia was not an official one, because the Austrian authorities wished to avoid any suspicion that they might have political intentions in this area. However, among the members of the mission there were two men who proved to be of major importance for the future relations between the two countries, namely the artillery-officer August Krziz, who drew the first map of Tehran, and the physician Jacob Eduard Polak, who worked to improve relations and spread knowledge about Persia in Europe.

As the commercial relations between the two countries continued to improve, it seemed necessary also to come to an official political understanding. The first steps towards this were taken in 1851/52, but they didn't achieve a positive result (Slaby, pp. 86). In 1855, Dāwud Khan was again sent to Vienna to hand over the Persian draft of a bilateral treaty. Vienna was unable to agree, since the draft did not contain the reciprocal "most favored" nation clause (HHStA, St-K, Admin. Reg. F 34, Karton 3). The counter-draft was sent to Tehran in 1856. The reply from Persia was handed over in Istanbul by Mirzā Malcolm Khan to the Austrian internuntius Count Prokesch-Osten (the title internuntius was a special one for the Austrian Ambassador to the Ottoman Court). The negotiations became difficult. Austria, although an independent country, was at the same time member of the German Confederation and Customs Union, and so they demanded the possible inclusion of German states into the treaty. The Persians did not understand this desire (Gobineau, p. 107), but [Farroḳ Khan Ġaffāri Kāšāni, Amin-al-Dawla](#), was ordered to bring the negotiations with Austria to an end while he was staying in Paris to make the peace-agreement with the British in 1857 (Fragner, pp. 30-36). Thus the first Austro-Persian "Friendship-, Trade- and Shipping-Treaty" was agreed in Paris on 17 May 1857. The Austrians had the right to establish consulates in Tehran and Tabriz, as well as at one place in the Gulf, while the Persians could establish consulates in Vienna, Venice and Trieste (Hübner, II, pp. 4,7,12,19,41; Kochwasser, p. 52).

A curious misunderstanding occurred in 1857 in connection with this treaty. Farroḳ Khan Amin-al-Dawla, still in Istanbul, informed Tehran that an Austrian legation under Colonel Eugen Schindlöcker would soon arrive there.



In view of the ongoing negotiations about the Austro-Persian treaty, officials in Tehran thought that Schindlöcker had been dispatched to sign the treaty. In fact his mission had been sent by the Austrian War Ministry to buy fine Arab horses for the imperial stables. The Austrians were surprised by the honors they received, while the Persians were disappointed when they discovered the actual goals of this mission. Schindlöcker and his companions returned to Vienna after having bought several fine horses (KA, Reg. Präs. 1857, 612, 775, 851, 1110; Hedāyat, X, p. 743; Blau, p. 67; Slaby, p. 92 ff.).

In 1860, the engineer Albert Joseph Gasteiger arrived in Tehran and, with help of Dāwud Khan, he found employment in the Dār al-fonun. Later he was appointed as a general and became famous for his road constructions. He also became the first European to be honored with the title “Khan.” Before leaving Austria he had made arrangements with his Foreign Ministry and the Chamber of Commerce to report on interesting things in Persia. In 1866, he was appointed first Austrian honorary consul in Tehran, but not recognized by the Persian authorities as being in Persian service. Nevertheless his reports became very important for diplomatic as well as commercial relations (F. Gasteiger; Slaby, p. 98). The first person to serve as Persian honorary consul in Vienna was a Mr. Foedes, followed by Emmanuel Goldberger (HHStA, F9, 45; Slaby, p. 112).

In the meantime Austria had lost its leading position in Germany, and was no longer a member of the “Deutscher Bund” confederation. The emperor had to come to an agreement with the Hungarians, and thus from 1867 onwards it was the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Oriental countries were invited to exhibit their products at the World Fair, which was planned in Vienna for 1873. Even a booklet written in Persian by Polak, describing the products which should be displayed, had been published and distributed in Persia (Polak, 1873). On the occasion of this fair, permanent diplomatic relations between Austria and Persia were established. Count Dubsy von Trebomyslice was appointed as the first Austrian minister to the Persian Court, and arrived in 1872 to invite the shah officially to the World Fair. Nāṣer-al-Din accepted willingly, thus becoming the first shah ever to visit Europe. On 20 April 1873, the Shah and his entourage left Tehran, traveling through Russia, Germany, England, France, Switzerland and Italy to Vienna (Busse, p. 379). In the meantime Mirzā Malcolm Khan Neẓām-al-Molk, the Persian minister in London, had been co-accredited to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and had come to Vienna to make preparations for the visit of his



shah. The Persian legation in residence in Vienna was established only in 1878.

The shah was solemnly received by Emperor Franz Joseph I and treated with exceptional courtesy during his stay in Vienna. He paid a visit to the World Fair, in particular to the Persian pavilion. Exhibits consisted mostly of carpets, silk, silk embroidery, shawls, wooden intarsia, copperware and old manuscripts. Impressed by what he had seen in the other pavilions and by a military parade, the shah sought Austrian help to reorganize his own army and administration. The Austrians promised help with regard to the administration, but they still had to consider Russian interests with respect to military help (Slaby, pp. 112-126; Schindler and de Norman, trans., pp. 255-96; Kochwasser, p. 55). The postal service was reorganized successfully by Gustav Riederer von Dachsberg, and the mint by Franz Pechan von Prägenberg, though this latter reorganization was only initially successful. When he was ordered to reduce the standard of the coins he quit the service (Curzon, I, p. 466; Polak, *ÖMO* 1876, pp. 186-88; Riederer, *ÖMO* 1876, pp. 17-22).

Five years later, however, there was a fundamental change of opinion in Vienna: Amin-al-Dawla, who had come to Vienna to prepare the second European trip of the shah, renewed the request for assistance in military matters and received a favorable reply. Dispatching such a mission was now considered by the Austrians as a chance to weaken Russian influence and to open new markets for export. Furthermore, the political situation had changed. While on the one hand Russia had been strengthened by the Russian-Turkish War of 1877, on the other hand it had been forced by the Berlin Congress to accept the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria. Relations between these two countries therefore grew tense and Austria no longer had to consider Russian interests in Persia.

The shah arrived in Vienna on 5 July 1878. The reception was more or less the same as 5 years earlier, but the preparations for this visit had improved significantly. All documents for carrying out the host's reform plans had been compiled properly and the minister of war, leaders in commerce and trade, and arms manufacturers all attended the reception (Curzon, I, pp. 587-88). The new Austro-Hungarian Minister Count Zaluski presented his credentials to the Shah on July 8, and Narimān Khan Mamigoniān Qawām-al-Saltāna was appointed the first Persian minister in residence to the Court of Vienna. The shah visited the arsenal and was particularly impressed by the display of modern arms. He was especially interested in the new Austrian guns invented by General Uchatius. On 14 July 1878, Nāṣer-al-Din Shah left Vienna, while



Nerimān Khan and Nāẓer-Āqā Khan, the minister in Paris, remained in Vienna to arrange everything for the Austrian military mission and the payment for the purchased arms (Schindler and de Norman, trans., Diary 2, pp. 234-71).

For the military mission 11 officers, 1 corporal and 1 bandmaster were selected. Their assignment was to drill the “Austrian Corps,” as it was called henceforth, comprising 7,000 soldiers: six infantry battalions, one rifle battalion, three batteries, one engineering corps and three military bands. The group departed from Tarnopol on 12 November, headed by General Gasteiger Khan; although he was not part of the official mission, the shah had asked for his assistance.

The weaponry order brought a significant change to Austro-Persian trade and commerce. By the end of the 1850s and the beginning of the 1860s, Austria was the fourth largest exporter to Persia, and the fifth largest importer (Blau, p. 155; Issawi, p. 134; Kochwasser, p. 65). Exported goods included ironware, steel goods, cutlery, gold braids, embroidery, clothes, matches, liquor and wine. The imports comprised mainly carpets, fruit, woolens and cotton. The weaponry order meant a boom in exports: 10,000 Werndl rifles with 3 million cartridges, 1,500 revolvers with half a million rounds of ammunition, and 18 Uchatius guns (9 cm) with three thousand shells. These arms deals continued: in 1882, 8,194 Werndl rifles including bayonets were ordered (KA 1882, Präs. 56-6/1); 4 batteries of mountain guns (7 cm) arrived in 1883; in 1888 20 Uchatius guns were brought; in 1883 20,000 Werndl rifles were ordered; and even in 1906/7 75% of all weaponry orders went to Austria, worth 200,400 *qerāns* (HHStA, Reports Leg. Tehran, 3 Nov 1878, 20 Feb 1881, 16 Nov 1883; ÖMO 1909, pp. 61-91). Sometimes it was not easy to get payment for the arms, such as 154,058 fl. for Werndl rifles (HHStA, Rep. Leg. Tehran, 5 Feb 1885), but finally all debts were paid.

After arriving in Tehran, the Austrian military mission had its first surprise, on discovering that Russian instructors had been committed to the cavalry, and that this unit was to become the core of the Persian brigade of Cossacks. It was paid for entirely by the governor in Tiflis, which meant that Persian authorities did not have any influence on it. The Austrians, however, had to face plotting and intrigues; the power play of the sycophants at court bought from abroad and above all, the *sepahsālār* (commander-in-chief), a friend of the Russians, made life difficult for them. These were the reasons why the official Austrian military mission ended after only three years. Henceforth, Austrian officers entering Persian services were only appointed with private



contracts (KA, Report Schemua). Nāṣer-al-Din Shah realized only too late that he had missed a chance, since the Austrians had an excellent reputation as instructors of the armed forces. Evidence of this was furnished by the renewed Persian requests to Austria for further official military missions to be sent.

Yet the political situation had changed. The weakness of the Qājār Empire was all too evident. They were unable to resist Russian and British “pénétration pacifique.” Persia was becoming like a quasi-protectorate. Nāṣer-al-Din Shah was well aware of this situation; he approached the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Germany in 1880 with a plea for the neutralization of Persia under the auspices of the Dual Alliance (Martin, p. 201; Shuster, p. 29; HHStA, Tel. 3 Feb 1880). The Persian efforts lasted until 1885, when both powers gave the definite answer that they were unable to provide any guarantees because the distances involved made any intervention impossible (HHStA, Rep. Leg. Tehran, 14 Jan 1885).

As already mentioned, world trade was continuously increasing. Austria, being in no position to compete with England in Persia for the sea route via the Gulf, directed her goods to northern Persia via Batumi, and from there, in customs-free transit, through Transcaucasia to Baku and Julfa. The result was that Russian goods, squeezed out of the markets of southern Persia, could no longer hold on to the northern markets, into which competing goods from Austria and Germany entered through Batumi. With the end of free transit through Russia in 1883, foreign trade in northern Persia was dealt a heavy blow (HHStA, Pol.A. XXVIII, Karton 9); thus, Russian trade enjoyed immediately a great advantage and began to expand rapidly (Issawi, p. 145). Austria eagerly attempted to remove the Transcaucasian “Transitverbot,” accusing the Russians of “questionable practices,” but this was in vain (Martin, p. 54). This meant that Austrian trade had to follow the route Trabzon-Erzurum-Tabriz. As Tabriz remained the most important place for trade it seemed necessary to have an Austrian consulate in this town. Moritz Horner, who had been sent to Tabriz by the Ministry of Commerce and the Export-Association in 1877 to study there the possibilities of commerce, had settled in the town as an independent tradesman, and now applied for the function of an honorary consul, but was refused by the Foreign Ministry. For the next years the French consul had to represent the Austro-Hungarian empire (Riederer, p. 186; *ÖMO* 1878, p. 190; HHStA, F8, 238). As the trade flow from the North had become difficult, the interested powers began to look to the South. Provided that the harbor of Mohammerah (Korramšahr) could have been



improved — a plan which Franz Columbari, the first Austrian in Persian service, had proposed 55 years earlier (Slaby, pp. 53) — and a road could have been built via Šuštar and Solţānābād (Arāk) to Tehran, the distance would have been a third that of the journey from Trabzon to Tehran. A precondition for this undertaking was free shipping on the Kārun up to Ahwāz. The Austrians would have had the advantage of free access to southern Persia as the Austrian “Lloyd” was already operating in the Persian Gulf, e.g. the steamer “Calypso” between Bušehr and Basra in 1888 (HHStA, XXVIII/10/Rep. 88a, 5 November 1888). In 1888, sailing on the Kārun was allowed, but only for 10 years, and nobody wanted to make the necessary investment under these conditions.

In 1889, Nāşer-al-Din Shah made his third trip to Europe to visit the World Fair at Paris, staying also in Vienna from 23 to 26 August, before continuing to Budapest. A carpet exhibition held in Vienna in 1891 was a remarkable success. As very fine and precious carpets were on display and Vienna was one of the most important trading centers for oriental carpets, the exhibition encouraged many to buy Persian carpets (Scala, Catalogue, 1891, pp. 5-10).

Nāşer-al-Din Shah was murdered on 1 May 1896, and his son Moţaffar-al-Din succeeded to the throne. He followed the example of his father by visiting Vienna in 1900, 1902 and 1905. In 1906, the struggle for the Persian constitution started and after a period of turmoil the shah had to sign the relevant bill. Elections were held and at the beginning of 1907 Moţaffar-al-Din and the crown prince signed the constitution. Just a few days later the shah died and was succeeded by Moĥammad-‘Ali. The troubles surrounding the constitution were exploited by Russia and Britain to strengthen their grip on Persia. The north of the country was declared the Russian sphere of influence, while the south was that of the British, and a neutral zone was left to divide the two. The finances of Persia remained under foreign control (Kochwasser, pp. 89). This agreement caused new disturbances and eventually the shah abolished the constitution. This was the signal for revolution, Moĥammad-‘Ali Shah was forced to abdicate and go into exile in 1909 (Slaby, pp. 248). Aĥmad Mirzā, who was only 11 years old, became shah, and Zell-al-Solţān was appointed regent. After many troubles and changes in the regency, in 1911 the ex-shah tried to regain power. He landed in Astarābād, equipped with Austrian guns and ammunition, but finally he had to leave the country for good (Slaby, pp. 256).

When new disturbances shook the country in 1911 the Russians used it as an



opportunity to occupy large areas of Azarbaijan. Again Vienna was asked by the Persians to intervene through diplomatic channels, but refused. The Austro-Hungarian empire, having annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908, had enough troubles already with the Russians and did not want to disturb the already tense relations further.

In the years before the outbreak of World War I, diplomatic relations between the two countries were kept at a low level. In 1912, Count Hugo Logothetti became the new Austro-Hungarian minister in Tehran, and in 1913 the consulate in Tabriz was reopened, with Franz Ertelt serving as honorary consul. Before this, the Austrian physician Dr Andreas Klodzianowski had held this post between 1897 and 1904, while for the rest of the time the French protected Austrian interests. The Persian minister in Vienna was Mirzā Moṣṭafā Khan Ṣafā-al-Mamālek, and the Persian honorary consulates were situated in Vienna, Budapest, Trieste and Brno.

The reopening of the consulate had become necessary because of the demands of the merchants. The Austro-Oriental Trade Company had been operating in Tabriz since 1908, and in 1913 the Orient Carpet Company was established. Besides these two companies, there were several Austrian merchants of minor importance also based in Tabriz (Litten, p. 265; Slaby, pp. 252,262).

The difference between the figures for Austrian exports to and imports from Persia given in independent studies and the figures published officially by the Austrian Ministry of Commerce is remarkable. Figures in independent studies are much higher than the official statistics. Furthermore, these figures are given sometimes according to the Persian calendar and sometimes according to the European one. On the basis of a variety of sources (*Statistik*; *ÖMO* 1907, pp. 72-74, *ÖMO* 1917, pp. 341-61; Jäger, pp. 62; Grothe, p. 65; Issawi, pp. 137—267; Zugmayer, pp. 84, 87, 188), the approximate figures are:

Year	Imports from Iran	Exports to Iran (in 1,000 Austrian shillings = ATS)
1979	768,280	918,778
1980	393,400	2,786,028
1985	1,341,253	3,602,633
1990	1,251,736	3,809,514
1995	635,196	1,748,939
2000	324,568	2,415,054



2001	16,717	(in millions EURO) 247,787
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During the second decade of the Islamic Republic of Iran, diplomatic relations with Austria intensified and the following agreements were concluded: Agreement on International Road Transport (*BGBI* 134/1989, 13 July 1989) Air Transport Agreement (*BGBI* 9/1991, 10 January 1991) Agreement on Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments (signed in Tehran, 15 February 2001) Agreement on Mutual Assistance and Co-operation in Custom Matters (signed in Vienna, 11 March 2002) Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with Respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital (signed in Vienna, 11 March 2002)

Besides these agreements a mixed Austro-Iranian economic commission has been meeting regularly to discuss further projects and proceedings. In 1991, a delegation of members of the Iranian parliament visited Vienna (*ÖZA* 1991, p. 77), Vice-Chancellor Alois Mock paid an official visit to Tehran (*ÖZA* 1991, p. 80) and Federal President Kurt Waldheim made a state visit to Iran in June of the same year. He was received by State President Rafsanjāni, who informed him that the Islamic Republic was interested in opening up to the West. At the end of his visit Waldheim paid a visit to the Austrian camp for Kurdish refugees in Orumiya, and was asked to prolong Austrian aid to this area (*ÖZA* 1991, p. 135).

In subsequent years high-ranking officials have been coming and going to the capitals of each other's countries. When the United States, still boycotting Iran, tried to put Austria under pressure in 1996 to consider Iran as an "enemy," the Austrian federal chancellor rejected this request (*ÖZA* 1996, p. 308). Austrian Federal President Thomas Klestil visited Tehran in September 1999 and met with President Moḥammad Kātami to solve together the pending problem of the protection of foreign investment in Iran (*WB*, 9 September 1999). The agreement was ready to be signed in February 2001, as listed above. The most recent Iranian state visit to Austria was made by President Kātami in March 2002. Many issues were discussed and the atmosphere of this meeting gave the assurance that Austro-Iranian diplomatic and commercial relations would continue at a high level.



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