



## EMĀMQOLĪ KHAN

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**EMĀMQOLĪ KHAN**, son of the celebrated Georgian *gōlām* Allāhverdī Khan (q.v.). Emām'qolī Khan is first mentioned as governor of Lār in Fārs in 1018/1610 (Eskandar Beg, II, p. 807; tr. Savory, II, p. 1010). On the death of his father in 1022/1613, Shah 'Abbās appointed Emāmqolī Khan to succeed him as governor-general (*beglarbeg*) of Fārs; he retained the post of governor of Lār and held the rank of an amir of the *dīvān* (Eskandar Beg, II, p. 871; tr., p. 1084). In 1029/1619-20 Emāmqolī Khan was put in charge of the blasting operations necessitated by Shah 'Abbās's plan to link the headwaters of the Kārūn and Zāyandarūd rivers and thus augment the water supply of his capital, Isfahan (Eskandar Beg, II, p. 950; tr., p. 1171).

As Safavid viceroy in the south, Emāmqolī Khan played a major role in breaking the power of the Portuguese in the Persian Gulf. The first blow against Portuguese hegemony had been struck by Emāmqolī Khan's father, Allāhverdī Khan, who had occupied Bahrain in 1011/1602 (Eskandar Beg, I, p. 614-16.; tr., p. 804 ff.; Falsafī, IV, pp. 66-67); Bahrain had been in Portuguese hands since 922/1516-17. Later Allāhverdī Khan and Emāmqolī Khan jointly drove the Portuguese out of Gombroon, modern Bandar-e 'Abbās (q.v.); (Eskandar Beg, p. 980; tr., p. 1201), but the Portuguese retaliated by building a fort on the island of Qešm, which had been seized by Albuquerque a century earlier. (Qešm was of vital importance to the defense of Hormuz, because it was the source of much of the island's freshwater supply, which was transported by sea.)

The arrival in the Persian Gulf of ships of the English East India Company



(q.v.), founded in 1600, gave Shah ‘Abbās his chance to drive the Portuguese out of Qešm and Hormuz, because, lacking a navy, he needed ships to transport his troops to those islands. Emāmqolī Khan overcame the reluctance of the English sea captains to cooperate by threatening to cancel the trading privileges and permission to open factories at Jāsk, Shiraz, and Isfahan that had been granted to the English East India Company by Shah ‘Abbās in 1615 (Bellan, p. 261; Savory, p. 195). The combined operations were successful; the Portuguese fort on the island of Qešm was captured after the *qezelbāš* forces had suffered heavy casualties; and in 1031/1622 the Portuguese garrison on the island of Hormuz surrendered after a two-month siege (Eskandar Beg, II, pp. 979-82; tr., II 1202-4; Falsafī, IV, pp. 214-28). The entente cordiale between the English East India Company and the shah was of short duration; in 1623 the factors presented the shah with a letter from King James I complaining that the Persians had not kept their side of the bargain with regard to the division of the spoils (Curzon, II, p. 419 and n. 3).

Shah ‘Abbās placed complete trust in Emāmqolī Khan, as he had done in the case of his father. The amir’s wealth was such that one day the shah said jokingly to him: “I request, Emāmqolī, that you will spend one dirhem less per day, that there may exist some slight difference between the disbursements of a khan and a king!” (Malcolm, I, p. 382), but the shah did not feel threatened by his viceroy’s power. In 1042/1633, however, Emāmqolī Khan fell victim to the psychological insecurity of ‘Abbās’s successor, Shah Şafī, who put him and his family to death (Falsafī, II, pp. 390-94; H. R. Roemer, “The Safavid Period,” in *Camb. Hist. Iran VI*, p. 282). In Shiraz he built a *madrasa* known as Madrasa-ye Kān and provided it with extensive endowments in real estate, which, however, had already been lost to private ownership in 1307/1889. He also had a bridge built over the river Kor in Marvdašt. This bridge, known as Pol-e Kān, is still standing (Fasāī, pp. 474, 1221-22; Forṣat, pp. 595-96).

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