



## KADQODĀ

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**KADQODĀ**, principal meaning “headman,” from Middle Persian *kadag-xwadāy*, lit. “head of a household, master of the house” (MacKenzie, p. 48; see also Vullers, II, p. 805a-b). During the medieval period, at least in post-Saljuq times, the term mainly referred to the headman of primary communal groups that were characterized by face to face relations in several social contexts—villages (*dehāt*), guilds of craftsmen (*ašnāf*), and urban quarters (*maḥallāt*); during the Pahlavi period, it also referred to the headman of a basic tribal sub-unit (*ṭāyefa*, or *tira*).

The term *kadqodā* is also recorded during the Ghaznavid and Saljuqid periods to denote an administrative position of a high-ranking *dabir* or other official who was the ruler’s confidant and steward (*piškār*; e.g., *mā kadqodāyān piškār-e moḥtašamān bāšim, bar mā farīzeh ast šalāḥ negāh dāštan* [Bayhaqi, ed. Fayyāz, p. 445]), as well as an alert, wise, and shrewd administrator (e.g., *kadqodā’i be šebh-e vazir*, Bayhaqi, ed. Fayyāz, p. 275; *idem*, pp. 344, 403, 432; Jorfādeqāni, p. 337). Such a person was often appointed as the military administrator (*kadqodā-ye laškar*) or provincial administrator of a commander on campaign or dispatched as governor of an important outlying province (Bayhaqi, ed. Fayyāz, pp. 555; Anvari, p. 259). In these cases, the *kadqodā* was often appointed by the ruler (sultan) or the vizier as a liaison officer between them and the official whom he accompanied, but he also functioned as a mentor and counselor to the latter (Bayhaqi, ed. Fayyāz, pp. 156, 172, 344, 374, 376, 884; Jorfādeqāni, p. 337).

The term *kadqodā* was also used, albeit rarely, to characterize an *amir* who



was assigned to the governorship of a province and who was expected to combine the qualifications of both governor and vizier (e.g., *va mā rā be Rey sālāri bāyad sakt hošyār o bidār o kadkodā'i, kodām kas āyad in do šoḡl rā?* [Bayhaqi, ed. Fayyāz, p. 344]).

#### KADKODĀ OF PRIMARY GROUPS

The kadkodā as the headman of a primary group functioned until the 19th century as the trustee and representative of the community in his charge and the agent of the higher authorities who had appointed him; he served as the mediator between the community and the higher authorities. During the Safavid period, the kalāntar of Isfahan appointed the kadkodās of the city wards, guilds, and surrounding villages, with the consent of the community. Although ideally one of the eldest and most experienced people of the community was chosen, in practice this function was often hereditary. The kadkodā's functions included collecting taxes and dues, assigning corvées (*bigāri*), and managing the local administration. Finally, as their trustee and representative, the kadkodā was expected to protect the members of the community from excessive taxation or unfair treatment by government agents or administrators (see below).

During the late Qajar period the kadkodā had a special form of address as *āliša'n*, along with ordinary merchants (for the form of address see "*Taškīš va tarqim-e alqāb*," p. 61; for examples of form of address in appointment letters, see Eḥtešāmi, pp. 101-2, 192, 196).

*Kadkodās of urban quarters.* Each town was divided into quarters over which a kadkodā was appointed. As the representative of a *maḥalla*, a kadkodā during the Mongol period filed complaints against the excessive collection of taxes and dues (*šeltāq*) by governors and other government agents, and he was commissioned by the rulers along with other officials to investigate cases of misconduct and report them to the higher authorities (Naḵjavāni, I, pp. 154, 158, 322). In the larger cities such as Shiraz, where the urban quarters divided into factions of *Ḥaydari* and *Ne'mati*, the kadkodās of either group served under a kadkodā-bāši (see Fasā'i, II, p. 22). The kadkodā was the lowest agent in the urban executive hierarchy and subordinate to the *kalāntar* or *beglerbegi*—or, on their behalf, the deputy (*naqib*) or *dāruḡa*—who were in charge of the town's security. Until the mid-19th century the kadkodās of the city quarters were selected by the inhabitants of each ward and formally appointed by the kalāntar.



The kadkodās were responsible for maintaining public order and managing the activities of the quarter. Their role in maintaining public safety and in providing a public registry is clear from the decree issued by Ṭahmāspqoli Khan (the future Nāder Shah, r. 1736-47) in 1731, which stated that the kadkodās (heads of city quarters) had to keep an accurate journal of what happened in their quarters, such as fights, drunkenness, prostitution, cases of perjury, marriages, births, and deaths. A copy of these journals had to be regularly sent to the shah, and there are records that the latter appointed informers to monitor the implementation of the decree (The Hague, Nationaal Archief, VOC 2255, dated 28 January 1731, fols. 2289-91). The kadkodās were also held personally responsible if their constituents did not pay or misbehaved, or if something untoward happened under their jurisdiction (see [CITIES iii](#)).

The kadkodās of Isfahan during the Safavid and Qajar periods were under the authority of the dāruḡa, who had some forty or fifty men under him. In the daytime he would sit in the Qayşariya (the bazaar of such valuable goods as jewelry and textiles), inflicting the bastinado on those who violated the criminal law. At night his watchmen (*gazmas*) patrolled the streets and roads (*godars*). The dāruḡa was accountable for any theft crimes and would in turn require payments from the kadkodās and the chiefs of the watchmen. The watchmen reported such crimes to the kadkodās, who then reported them to the dāruḡa. The dāruḡa would then present a written report to the governor-general through the Department of Justice (Divān-e ‘adliya; Taḥwildār, p. 125). In Shiraz by the second half of the 19th-century, the office of the dāruḡa had all but become obsolete, and thereafter all of the duties regarding security and order in the urban quarters fell to the kadkodās.

The kadkodās of the urban quarters of Tehran were incorporated into a modern police force in 1878, when the Department of Police and Municipality (Edāra-ye jalila-ye polis-e dār al-ḡelāfa va eḥtesābiya) was established in the capital (Seyfi Fami Tafreši, pp. 53-75). According to the 1899 census of Tehran, each kadkodā supervised a number of deputies (*nāyeb*s), each in charge of a neighborhood, called *pātoq*, the latter divided into a number of sub-units of roads (*godars*). The Dawlat quarter, for instance, was divided into 10 *pātoqs* and 34 *godars*. Some of the officers who supervised the guardsmen of a *godar* were now referred to as the *polis*, e.g., “Goḡar-e ‘Ali Police” (Sa‘dvandiān and Etteḡadiah, pp. 358).

*Kadkodās of guilds of craftsmen.* More substantial information on guilds



becomes available during the Safavid period, when each trade or craft formed a guild headed by a headman. The guild chiefs, known as *kadkodā*, *bozorg*, or *kadkodā-bāši*, were nominated by the masters of a particular guild, and the candidate was subject to approval by the kalāntar. In Isfahan during the Safavid period, kadkodās of guilds were elected by at least a two-thirds majority of a guild's masters (*ostāds*; Mirzā Rafi'ā, p. 121). According to *Tadkerat al-moluk*, "each guild (*şinf*) appoint among themselves the person whom they consider sure and trustworthy; they draw up a testimonial for him and fix a salary for him (*dar vajh-i ū*). Having had [the document] legalized by the Naqib's seal they bring it to the kalantar and obtain (*bāzyāft*) from him a certificate (*ta'liqa*) and an honorary robe for [their nominee], who thereafter begins to administer (*ratq-u-fatq*) their affairs" (Minorsky, 1943, p. 81).

The kadkodā managed the guild's affairs both internally and externally; his most important tasks were the collection of taxes and dues, as well as assignment of corvées (*bigāri*). His other functions included conflict resolution and oversight. Designating the price of goods was an important function of the kadkodā and elders of the guilds of craftsmen and shopkeepers, a function that has remained to the present date. The office of Mohtaseb-al-Mamālek, entrusted during the Safavid period with supervising the proper conduct of the people and, more specifically, the merchants, craftsmen, and shopkeepers in the bazaars throughout the empire, "obtain[ed] from the elders of each guild an undertaking (*iltizām*) concerning the prices of the goods [in which they deal]." Following the approval of related authorities and their registration in the financial books, the designated prices were enforced by the office of the Mohtaseb-al-Mamālek in Isfahan and his deputies in provincial towns (Minorsky, p. 83). The guild chief often resided in the main manufactory of the guild or at the *čahār-suq* (intersection of two main streets, or *rāsta*) of his guild (see [AŞNĀF](#); [BĀZĀR](#)). The kadkodās of those guilds that were subject to corvées were especially powerful, as they decided who had to contribute to the corvées and to what extent. Opposition to the headman and his council (*rīš-safīdhā o sar jūqahā*) could be punished with corvées.

A qualified person who wished to open his own shop presented himself to the guild kadkodā, stated his name and address, and was registered. If there were no objections to the candidate, he was allowed to open a shop after the payment of a small sum. The only limitation on his business appears to have been the requirement that he keep a certain distance between his shop and others of the same guild, except when located in an area designated for a



specific category of work (Chardin, IV, p. 94).

In the Qajar period, however, the powers of the *kadkodās* of the guilds of craftsmen were curtailed. The authority of the headman depended on the success of his mediator's role between the government and the guild. Many guilds in the 19th century were in a weak position, and their "organization resembled rather a police regulation than a privilege" (Bleibtreu, p. 125). Yet, a guild's *kadkodā* was seldom dismissed except on the grounds of objections against him from his electors; even then, they had to prove his negligence or his engagement in criminal practices (Floor, 1971a, p. 33).

*Kadkodās of villages.* Administration of village communities, as the basic administrative and fiscal unit in rural areas, was in the hand of the *kadkodās*. The *kadkodās* appear to have been responsible for receiving guests, distributing land among the villagers, allotting taxes and collecting and remitting them to the next highest official or landowner. He may also have been required to collect levies for labor service (*bigāri*) or conscripts (*sarbāz-e boničā*) from rural areas. Moreover, together with the village elders (Pers. *riš-sefidān*; Turk. *āq-saqal*, lit. "white bearded"), the *kadkodā* participated in the management of the village, including the allotment of space to newcomers, agricultural management, distribution of water, settlement of disputes, and punishment of transgressions; he was assisted in this by a *pākār* (Lambton, pp. 272, 334, 122-44; Floor, 2003).

Because the *kadkodā* played a dual role in the village as both the government's representative and a conduit for the villagers' complaints to the government, there were times when the *kadkodā* could either file a complaint with the higher authorities or even refuse to turn over the excessive taxes (*šeltāq*) to the collectors (Naḵjavāni, II, pp. 176, 264, 274, 75, 283-85, 297, 300-302, 323; Aubin, 1959, p. 73; Tate, pp. 327, 329; Greenfield, pp. 147, 157; Morier, p. 236).

It appears that, during the pre-Mongol period, villages "formed relatively stable and to some extent self-governing communities under their own *kadkodās*, who acted as middlemen between the village communities and the government, or the *muqta*" (Lambton, p. 175). In later periods, *kadkodās* appear to have been chosen from among the leading men of the village by the consent of the villagers, but the candidate had to be approved by the benefice holders or *kalāntar* or, in the case of privately owned land, by the landowner. Following the development of private landownership during the post-Constitutional period, and more specifically after the enactment of the law of



10 December 1935 (*Qānun-e kadkodā'i*), selection of kadkodās was entrusted to the landowners, and their formal appointment was made by the provincial governor. In the case of multiple ownership of the village lands, two kadkodās were selected by the main owners and appointed by the governor; in the case of small-holding villages, the governor was entrusted to select and appoint the kadkodā with the consent of smallholders from among the leading villagers (see below).

*Kadkodās of tribal sub-units.* It appears that the term “kadkodā” replaced the original local designations of the headman of tribal sub-units (such as *key*) after the enactment of the law of 10 December 1935, when the provincial governors began to practice the appointment of the kadkodās in rural and tribal areas (see Şafinežād, *Lorhā-ye Irān*, Tehran, 2002, pp. 158-59). Kadkodās of a political tribal sub-unit (*tira* or *ṭāyefa*) were selected among the influential members of the tribal community by the consent of the elders of the constituent units and appointed by the tribal Khan, but the office tended to be hereditary.

Until the mid-20th century, political authority was in the hands of tribal chiefs (Khan or Il-Khan), and then distributed on a hierarchical basis among the *kalāntars* of tribal clans (*ṭā'efas*), kadkodās of *tiras*, and *riš-sefidān* (elders) of the *tāš* or *awlād*. This hierarchical order prevailed among Qaşqā'is and Baḳtiāris (see BAḲTIĀRI TRIBE i), but among some, such as the Boir Aḩmadis, the main tribal subgroups were *tiras* under kalāntars and then *ṭā'efas* under kadkodās (see Şafinežād, pp. 129-45; see also 'AŞĀYER). But after the land reform and nationalization of pastures in the 1960s, when Khans lost their power in tribal areas, kalāntars and kadkodās expanded their authority and filled the power vacuum in their related areas.

The kadkodās of tribal areas, similar to those of rural areas, maintained order, administered justice, and acted as intermediaries between the tribal community and the outside world. But the most significant function of the tribal kadkodās, in cooperation with the khans and kalāntars, was coordinating and supervising migrations and the settlement of disputes regarding the overuse of pasturelands and watering places. The kadkodās of various tribal areas, at least until the mid-20th century, imposed “levies on the tribes of clarified butter and meat for their own expenses . . . Kadkhoda also collects for the Khan, Kalantar and himself what is nominally considered as gifts on specific occasions such as Nowruz. To what extent compulsion would be exercised were these gifts not brought is open to conjecture. The kadkodās



in some tribal areas are responsible for the collection of government dues in which case they retain part of what they collected by way of commission” (Lambton, 1953, p. 290). But many of these levies have disappeared since the 1970s.

#### KADĶODĀ AFTER THE REVOLUTION

At the beginning of the **Constitutional Revolution**, the Law of the Organization of Provinces and Sub Provinces and the directive of governance for the governors (*Qānun-e taškil-e eyālāt va velāyāt va dastur al-‘amal-e ḥokkām*) was enacted in February 1908. Articles 287, 291, 300, 302, 303, 328 of the law entitled the governors to appoint and dismiss the chiefs of city quarters (*kadķodāhā-ye maḥallāt*). The urban kadķodā was made the police chief of his quarter (Article 287). This law made the village a legal entity over which a kadķodā with clearly defined responsibilities, once selected by the approval of a landowner “with the consent of the majority of the villagers,” was formally appointed by the deputy governor (*nāyeb al-ḥokuma*); in fact, he became a government official (Articles 378-86). The law of 10 December 1935 (*Qānun-e kadķodā’i*) established the kadķodā as an instrument of the landowner, regardless of the legal nature of the property, whether private, state-owned, or *waqf*; it listed his qualifications and tasks, which were to ensure good agricultural management and execution of all government programs and instructions. Despite the formal change, in reality things did not change much with regard to rural power relations. The same holds true for the implementation of the Land Reform Act of 1963, when the kadķodā formally became responsible to the new village council; however, in actuality his responsibility was to the government. His judicial function was taken over by the *kāna-ye enšāf* (chamber of justice; see judicial and legal systems v). After the Islamic Revolution of 1979 all functions of the kadķodā were transferred to the Islamic village council (Smith et al., p. 263; Metz, pp. 106-7).

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