



KĀMRĀN B. SHAH MAḤMUD

KĀMRĀN B. SHAH MAḤMUD, Sadōzāy ruler of Herat (r. 1826-42). His career coincided with the waning of Sadōzāy power and the rise of the Moḥammadzāy dynasty in the 1820s. This shift in political configurations was manifested in a prolonged power struggle between Kāmrān's father, Shah Maḥmud b. Timur Shah (r. 1801-04, 1809-18), and the latter's half brother, Shah Šojā' (r. 1804-09), over control of Kabul. In 1818 a conflict with the powerful Moḥammadzāy lineage forced Shah Maḥmud to flee to [Herat](#), which became the last Sadōzāy enclave until Kāmrān's death in 1842. With Dōst Moḥammad Khan Moḥammadzāy's seizure of Kabul in 1826, the former Sadōzāy empire broke up into a number of principalities. The regions east of the Khyber Pass (q.v.) fell to the Sikh empire; the Uzbek khanates of Lesser Turkistan asserted their independence; [Kabul](#) and [Kandahar](#) were held by [Dōst Moḥammad Khan](#) and his half-brothers; and Herat drifted into the orbit of Qajar interests. From the perspective of Tehran, Herat formed part of the hereditary Iranian dominions and was subservient to the Qajar crown. Both the Iranian and the Afghan sources describe Kāmrān as "prince" but employ different terms. While the Qajar historian, Lesān-al-Molk, consistently refers to him as Kāmrān Mirzā, 19th-century Afghan sources prefer the title of "Šāhzāda Kāmrān" (Fayż-Moḥammad, pp. 116-18, Solṭān Moḥammad Kāleš, p. 282).

Kāmrān served as governor of Kandahar during both of Shah Maḥmud's reigns in Kabul (Fōfalzāy, 1967, p. 236; Fayż-Moḥammad, pp. 63, 88; Rawlinson, pp. 837-39; Fażl-Allāh Širāzi, p. 392). When Shah Maḥmud was



deposed in 1818, Kāmrān accompanied him to Herat. Subsequently, he began to challenge his father's authority. In early July 1826 he requested military assistance from Šojā'-al-Salṭana, the Qajar governor of Khorasan (r. 1816-27), against Shah Maḥmud, who had laid siege to the citadel of Herat with more than 4,000 troops. The news of the approaching Qajar army enabled Kāmrān to gain the upper hand and to become the undisputed ruler of Herat. Shah Maḥmud withdrew from political life and died of natural causes in 1828-29 (Faḏl-Allāh Širāz, pp. 631-32; Lesān-al-Molk, p. 375; Riāzi, pp. 68-69; Solṭān Moḥammad Kāleš, p. 282).

Kāmrān formally accepted Qajar authority by striking coins and reciting the Friday prayer sermon (*koṭba*) in the name of the Iranian king. Beyond these tokens of subservience, the government of Herat did not furnish any discernable revenue to the Qajar crown. The income derived from the Sadōzāy principality amounted to no more than 15,000 tumāns in 1833 and thus decreased to less than a third as compared with 1817. This amount was, moreover, negligible in relation to the revenue yielded by the provinces that were more firmly incorporated in the Qajar state (Lesān-al-Molk, pp. 282-84, 488, 496-67, 504; Faḏl-Allāh Širāzi, pp. 447-49, 862). During Moḥammad Shah Qajar's siege of Herat from 21 November 1837 to 9 September 1838, Kāmrān and the population of Herat offered stubborn resistance with the help of Eldred Pottinger (1811-43), a young British officer of the Bombay artillery, who happened to be in the city at the time. In 1841 Kāmrān renewed his previous pledges of allegiance to the Qajar rulers (Etteḥādiya, pp. 31, 34-35).

There are some positive reports concerning Kāmrān's character and mode of governance (Masson quoted in Forrest, 1906, p. 108). On the whole, however, both Persian and European accounts attest to qualities that may be summed up as "debauchery." Viewing Kāmrān as the personification of Sadōzāy decline, Solṭān Moḥammad Kāleš describes him as of short stature, pockmarked, bloodthirsty, and oppressive. Furthermore, he adduces the forceful abduction of other men's brides and extortions from local merchants as examples of Kāmrān's tyranny. In his government, Kāmrān was entirely dependent on his able and ruthless minister, Yār Moḥammad Alekōzāy (d. 1851), who gradually curtailed his power and eventually deposed him in 1842. Kāmrān's dramatic end was hastened by an ill-fated attempt to reassert authority. But instead of removing Yār Moḥammad Alekozāy from power, he found himself besieged in the citadel of Herat for fifty days before he was



deported and murdered at Kohsān (Moḥammad Kāleš, pp. 285-86).

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